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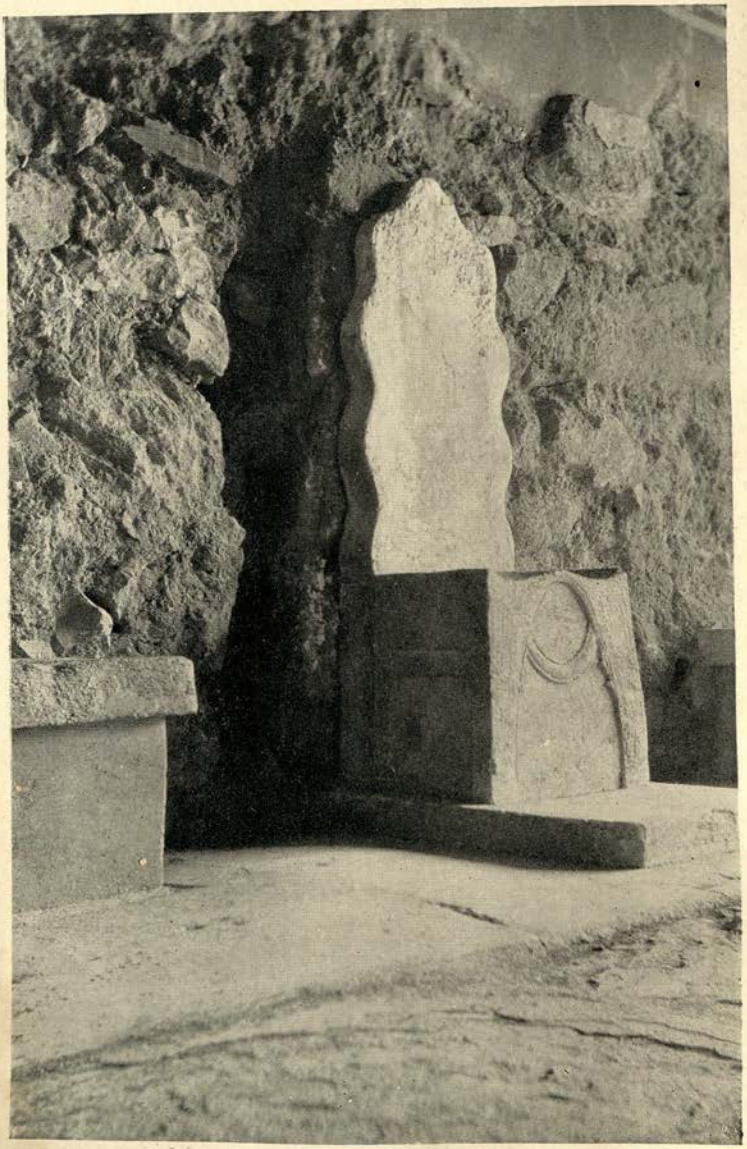
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THE THRONE OF MINOS (*p.* 72)

THE SEA-KINGS OF CRETE

BY

REV. JAMES BAIKIE, F.R.A.S.

81927

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To

MY SISTERS

AND

MY BROTHERS

PREFACE

THE object aimed at in the following pages has been to offer to the general reader a plain account of the wonderful investigations which have revolutionized all ideas as to the antiquity and the level of the earliest European culture, and to endeavour to make intelligible the bearing and significance of the results of these investigations. In the hope that the extraordinary resurrection of the first European civilization may appeal to a more extended constituency than that of professed students of ancient origins, the book has been kept as free as possible from technicalities and the discussion of controverted points; and throughout I have endeavoured to write for those who, while from their schooldays they have loved the noble and romantic story of Ancient Greece, have been denied the opportunity of a more thorough study of it than comes within the limits of an ordinary education.

In the first chapter this standpoint may seem to have been unduly emphasized, and the retelling of the ancient legends may be accounted mere surplusage. Such, no doubt, it will be to some readers, but perhaps they may be balanced by others whose

recollection of the great stories of Classic Greece has grown a little faint with the lapse of years, and who are not unwilling to have it prompted again. Reference to the legends was in any case unavoidable, since one of the most remarkable results of the explorations has been the disclosure of the solid basis of historic fact on which they rested; and, if the book was to accomplish its purpose for the readers for whom it was designed, reference seemed almost necessarily to involve retelling.

I have to acknowledge extensive obligations to the writings and reports of the various investigators who have accomplished so wonderful a resurrection of this ancient world. My debt to the works of Dr. A. J. Evans will be manifest to all who have any acquaintance with the subject; but to such authors as Mrs. H. B. Hawes, Dr. Mackenzie, Professors Burrows, Murray, and Browne, and Messrs. D. G. Hogarth and H. R. Hall, to name only a few among many, my obligations are only less than to the acknowledged chief of Cretan explorers.

To the Rev. James Kennedy, D.D., librarian of the New College, Edinburgh, and to the Rev. C. J. M. Middleton, M.A., Crailing, my thanks are due for invaluable help afforded in the collection of material, and I have been not less indebted to Mr. A. Brown, Galashiels, and to Messrs. C. H. Brown and C. R. A. Howden, Edinburgh, and others, for their assistance in the preparation of the illustrations. To Mr. A. Brown in particular are due Plates II., III., IV., V., IX., X., XV., XVI., XX.,

XXIII., XXIV., and XXV.; and to Messrs. C. H. Brown and C. R. A. Howden Plates I., VII., VIII., XI., XII., XVII. (1), and XXI. I have to record my hearty thanks to the Council of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies for the use of Plates XXIX. and XXX., reproduced by their permission from the *Journal of Hellenic Studies;* to the Committee of the British School at Athens for the use of Plate XIX. and the plan of Knossos from their *Annual;* and to Dr. A. J. Evans and Mr. John Murray for Plates VI., XIII., and XIV., from the *Monthly Review*, March, 1901. For the redrawing and adaptation of the plan of Knossos I am indebted to Mr. H. Baikie, B.Sc., Edinburgh, and for the sketch-map of Crete to my wife.


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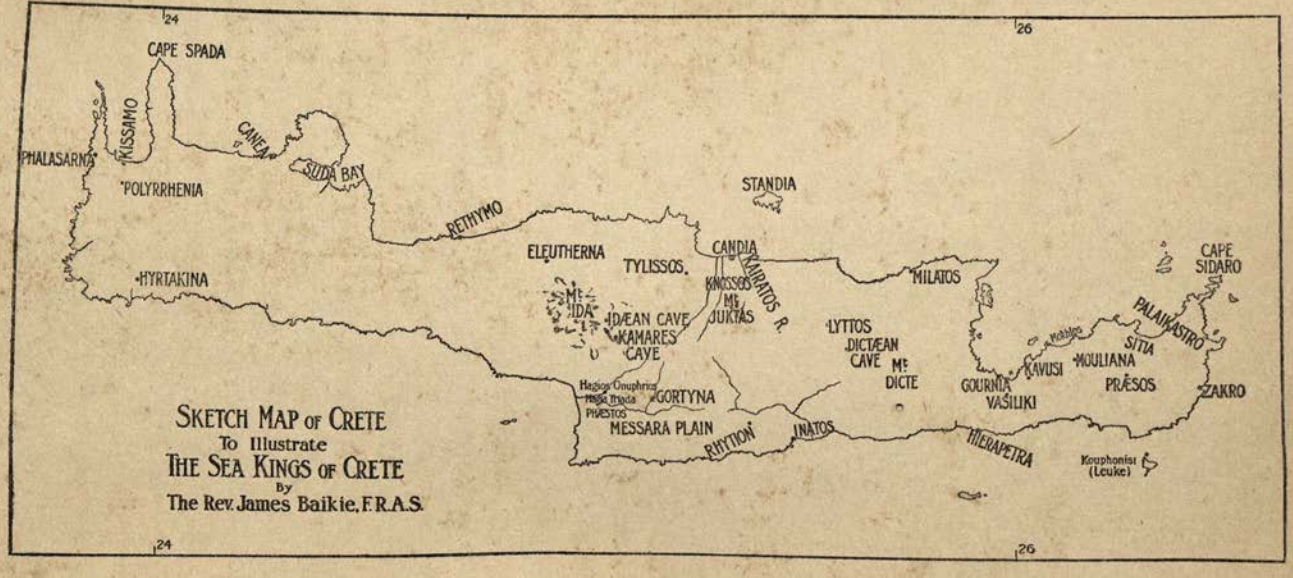
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KNOSSOS
Mt. JUKTAS
HYRTAKINA
Mt. IDA
IDÆAN CAVE
KAMARES CAVE
LYTTOS
DICTÆAN CAVE
Mt. DICTE
MILATOS
CAPE SIDARO
PALAIKASTRO
SITIA
KAVUSI
MOULIANA
GOURNIA
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SKETCH MAP OF CRETE
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THE SEA KINGS OF CRETE
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THE SEA-KINGS OF CRETE

AND THE

PREHISTORIC CIVILIZATION OF GREECE

CHAPTER I

THE LEGENDS

THE resurrection of the prehistoric age of Greece, and the disclosure of the astonishing standard of civilization which had been attained on the mainland and in the isles of the Ægean at a period at least 2,000 years earlier than that at which Greek history, as hitherto understood, begins, may be reckoned as among the most interesting results of modern research into the relics of the life of past ages. The present generation has witnessed remarkable discoveries in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, but neither Niffur nor Abydos disclosed a world so entirely new and unexpected as that which has been revealed by the work of Schliemann and his successors at Troy, Mycenæ, and Tiryns, and by that of Evans and the other explorers—Italian, British, and American—in Crete. The Mesopotamian and Egyptian discoveries traced back a little farther streams which had already been followed far up

their course; those of Schliemann and Evans revealed the reality of one which, so to speak, had hitherto been believed to flow only through the dreamland of legend. It was obvious that mighty men must have existed before Agamemnon, but what manner of men they were, and in what manner of world they lived, were matters absolutely unknown, and, to all appearance, likely to remain so. An abundant wealth of legend told of great Kings and heroes, of stately palaces, and mighty armies, and powerful fleets, and the whole material of an advanced civilization. But the legends were manifestly largely imaginative—deities and demi-gods, men and fabulous monsters, were mingled in them on the same plane—and it seemed impossible that we should ever get back to the solid ground, if solid ground had ever existed, on which these ancient stories first rested.

For the historian of the middle of the nineteenth century Greek history began with the First Olympiad in 776 B.C. Before that the story of the return of the Herakleids and the Dorian conquest of the men of the Bronze Age might very probably embody, in a fanciful form, a genuine historical fact; the Homeric poems were to be treated with respect, not only on account of their supreme poetical merit, but as possibly representing a credible tradition, though, of course, their pictures of advanced civilization were more or less imaginative projections upon the past of the culture of the writer's own period or periods. Beyond that lay the great waste land of

legend, in which gods and godlike heroes moved and enacted their romances among 'Gorgons and Hydras and Chimeras dire.' What proportion of fact, if any, lay in the stories of Minos, the great lawgiver, and his war fleet, and his Labyrinth, with its monstrous occupant; of Theseus and Ariadne and the Minotaur; of Dædalus, the first aeronaut, and his wonderful works of art and science; or of any other of the thousand and one beautiful or tragic romances of ancient Hellas, to attempt to determine this lay utterly beyond the sphere of the serious historian. 'To analyze the fables,' says Grote, 'and to elicit from them any trustworthy particular facts, appears to me a fruitless attempt. The religious recollections, the romantic inventions, and the items of matter of fact, *if any such there be*, must for ever remain indissolubly amalgamated, as the poet originally blended them, for the amusement or edification of his auditors. . . . It was one of the agreeable dreams of the Grecian epic that the man who travelled far enough northward beyond the Rhiphæan Mountains would in time reach the delicious country and genial climate of the virtuous Hyperboreans, the votaries and favourites of Apollo, who dwelt in the extreme north, beyond the chilling blasts of Boreas. Now, the hope that we may, by carrying our researches up the stream of time, exhaust the limits of fiction, and land ultimately upon some points of solid truth, appears to me no less illusory than this northward journey in quest of the Hyperborean elysium.' Grote's frankly sceptical

attitude represents fairly well the general opinion of the middle of last century. The myths were beautiful, but their value was not in any sense historical; it arose from the light which they cast upon the workings of the active Greek mind, and the revelation which they gave of the innate poetic faculty which created myths so far excelling those of any other nation.

Within the last forty years all this has been changed. Opinions like that so dogmatically expressed by our great historian are no longer held by anyone who has followed the current of modern investigations, and remain only as monuments of the danger of dogmatizing on matters concerning which all preconceived ideas may be upset by the results of a single season's spade-work on some ancient site; and he would be a bold man who would venture to-day to call 'illusory' the search for 'points of solid truth' in the old legends, or to assert that 'the items of matter of fact, if any such there be,' are inextricable from the mass of romantic inventions in which they are embedded. The work, of course, is by no means complete; very probably it is scarcely more than well begun; but already the dark gulf of time that lay behind the Dorian conquest is beginning to yield up the unquestionable evidences of a great, and splendid, and almost incredibly ancient civilization, which neither for its antiquity nor for its actual attainment has any cause to shrink from comparison with the great historic civilizations of Mesopotamia or the Nile Valley; and while the process

of disentangling the historic nucleus of the legends from their merely mythical and romantic elements cannot yet be undertaken with any approach to certainty, it is becoming continually more apparent, not only that in many cases there was such a nucleus, but also what were some of the historic elements around which the poetic fancy of later times drew the fanciful wrappings of the heroic tales as we know them. It is not yet possible to trace and identify the actual figures of the heroes of prehistoric Greece : probably it never will be possible, unless the as yet untranslated Cretan script should furnish the records of a more ancient Herodotus, and a new Champollion should arise to decipher them ; but there can scarcely be any reasonable doubt that genuine men and women of Ægean stock filled the rôles of these ancient romances, and that the wondrous story of their deeds is, in part at least, the record of actual achievements.

In this remarkable resurrection of the past the most important and convincing part has been played by the evidence from Crete. The discoveries which were made during the last quarter of the nineteenth century by Schliemann and his successors at Mycenæ, Tiryns, Orchomenos, and elsewhere, were quite conclusive as to the former existence of a civilization quite equal to, and in all probability the original of, that which is described for us in the Homeric poems ; but it was not until the treasures of Knossos and Phæstos began to be revealed in 1900 and the subsequent years that it became manifest that what was known as the Mycenæan

civilization was itself only the decadence of a far richer and fuller culture, whose fountain-head and whose chief sphere of development had been in Crete. And it has been in Crete that exploration and discovery have led to the most striking illustration of many of the statements in the legends and traditions, and have made it practically certain that much of what used to be considered mere romantic fable represents, with, of course, many embellishments of fancy, a good deal of historic fact.

Our first task, therefore, is to gather together the main features of what the ancient legends of Greece narrated about Crete and its inhabitants, and their relations to the rest of the Ægean world. The position of Crete—'a halfway house between three continents, flanked by the great Libyan promontory, and linked by smaller island stepping-stones to the Peloponnese and the mainland of Anatolia'—marks it out as designed by Nature to be a centre of development in the culture of the early Ægean race, and, in point of fact, ancient traditions unanimously pointed to the great island as being the birthplace of Greek civilization. The most ambitious tradition boldly transcended the limits of human occupation, and gave to Divinity itself a place of nurture in the fastnesses of the Cretan mountains. That many-sided deity, the supreme god of the Greek theology, had in one of his aspects a special connection with the island. The great son of Kronos and Rhea, threatened by his unnatural father with the same doom which had overtaken his brethren, was said

to have been saved by his mother, who substituted for him a stone, which her unsuspecting spouse devoured, thinking it to be his son. Rhea fled to Crete to bear her son, either in the Idæan or the Dictæan cave, where he was nourished with honey and goat's milk by the nymph Amaltheia until the time was ripe for his vengeance upon his father. (It has been suggested that in this somewhat grotesque legend we have a parabolic representation of one of the great religious facts of that ancient world—the supersession by the new anthropomorphic faith of the older cult, whose objects of adoration, made without hands, and devoid of human likeness, were sacred stones or trees. Kronos, the representative of the old faith, clung to his sacred stone, while the new human God was being born, before whose worship the ancient cult of the pillar and the tree should pass away.)

In the Dictæan cave, also, Zeus grown to maturity, was united to Europa, the daughter of man, in the sacred marriage from which sprang Minos, the great legendary figure of Crete. And to Crete the island god returned to close his divine life. Primitive legend asserted that his tomb was on Mount Juktas, the conical hill which overlooks the ruins of the city of Minos, his son, his friend, and his priest. It was this surprising claim of the Cretans to possess the burial-place of the supreme God of Hellas which first attached to them the unenviable reputation for falsehood which clung to them throughout the classical period, and was

crystallized by Callimachus in the form adopted by St. Paul in the Epistle to Titus—'The Cretans are alway liars.'

It is round Minos, the son of Zeus and Europa, that the bulk of the Cretan legends gathers. The suggestion has been made, with great probability, that the name Minos is not so much the name of a single person as the title of a race of kings. 'I suspect,' says Professor Murray, 'that Minos was a name, like "Pharaoh" or "Cæsar," given to all Cretan Kings of a certain type.' With that, however, we need not concern ourselves at present, further than to notice that the bearer of the name appears in the legends in many different characters, scarcely consistent with one another, or with his being a single person. According to the story, Minos is not only the son but also the 'gossip' of Zeus; he is, like Abraham, 'the friend of God.' He receives from the hand of God, like another Moses, the code of laws which becomes the basis of all subsequent legislation; he holds frequent and familiar intercourse with God, and, once in every nine years, he goes up to the Dictæan cave of the Bull-God 'to converse with Zeus,' to receive new commandments, and to give account of his stewardship during the intervening period. Finally, at the close of his life, he is transferred to the underworld, and the great human lawgiver becomes the judge of the dead in Hades.

That is one side of the Minos legend, perhaps the most ancient; but along with it there exists another





(1) THE RAMP, TROY, SECOND CITY (*p.* 38)

(2) THE CIRCLE GRAVES, MYCENÆ (*p.* 43)

group of stories of a very different character, so different as to lend colour to the suggestion that we are now dealing, not with the individual Minos who first gave the name its vogue, but with a successor or successors in the same title. The Minos who is most familiar to us in Greek story is not so much the lawgiver and priest of God as the great sea-King and tyrant, the overlord of the Ægean, whose vengeance was defeated by the bravery of the Athenian hero, Theseus. From this point of view, Minos was the first of men who recognized the importance of sea-power, and used it to establish the supremacy of his island kingdom. 'The first person known to us as having established a navy,' says Thucydides, 'is Minos. He made himself master of what is now called the Hellenic sea, and ruled over the Cyclades, into most of which he sent the first colonies, expelling the Carians, and appointing his own sons governors; and thus did his best to put down piracy in those waters, a necessary step to secure the revenues for his own use.' To Herodotus also, Minos, though obviously a shadowy figure, is the first great Thalassokrat. 'Polykrates is the first of the Grecians of whom we know who formed a design to make himself master of the sea, except Minos the Knossian.' But the evidence for the existence of this early Sea-King and his power rests on surer grounds than the vague tradition recorded by the two great historians. The power of Minos has left its imprint in unmistakable fashion in the places which were called by his name. Each of the

Minoas which appear so numerously on the coasts of the Mediterranean, from Sicily on the west to Gaza on the east, marks a spot where the King or Kings who bore the name of Minos once held a garrison or a trading-station, and their number shows how wide-reaching was the power of the Cretan sea-Kings.

But the great King was by no means so fortunate in his domestic relationships as in his foreign adventures. The domestic skeleton in his case was the composite monster the Minotaur, half man, half bull, fabled to have been the fruit of a monstrous passion on the part of the King's wife, Pasiphae. This monster was kept shut up within a vast and intricate building called the Labyrinth, contrived for Minos by his renowned artificer, Dædalus. Further, when his own son, Androgeos, had gone to Athens to contend in the Panathenaic games, having overcome all the other Greeks in the sports, he fell a victim to the suspicion of Ægeus, the King of Athens, who caused him to be slain, either by waylaying him on the road to Thebes, or by sending him against the Marathonian bull. In his sorrow and righteous anger, Minos, who had already conquered Megara by the treachery of Scylla, raised a great fleet, and levied war upon Athens; and, having wasted Attica with fire and sword, he at length reduced the land to such straits that King Ægeus and his Athenians were glad to submit to the hard terms which were asked of them. The demand of Minos was that every ninth year Athens should

send him as tribute seven youths and seven maidens. These were selected by lot, or, according to another version of the legend, chosen by Minos himself, and on their arrival in Crete were cast into the Labyrinth, to become the prey of the monstrous Minotaur.

The first and second instalments of this ghastly tribute had already been paid; but when the time of the third tribute was drawing nigh, the predestined deliverer of Athens appeared in the person of the hero Theseus. Theseus was the unacknowledged son of King Ægeus and the Princess Aithra of Trœzen. He had been brought up by his mother at Trœzen, and on arriving at early manhood had set out to make his way to the Court of Ægeus and secure acknowledgment as the rightful son of the Athenian King. The legend tells how on his way to Athens he cleared the lands through which he journeyed of the pests which had infested them. Sinnis, the pine-bender, who tied his miserable victims to the tops of two pine-trees bent towards one another and then allowed the trees to spring back, the young hero dealt with as he had dealt with others; Kerkuon, the wrestler, was slain by him in a wrestling bout; Procrustes, who enticed travellers to his house and made them fit his bed, stretching the short upon the rack and lopping the limbs of the over-tall, had his own measure meted to him; and various other plagues of society were abated by the young hero. Not long after his arrival at Athens and acknowledgment by his

father, the time came round when the Minoan heralds should come to Athens to claim the victims for the Minotaur. Seeing the grief that prevailed in the city, and the anger of the people against his father, Ægeus, whom they accounted the cause of their misfortune, Theseus determined that, if possible, he would make an end of this humiliation and misery, and accordingly offered himself as one of the seven youths who were to be devoted to the Minotaur. Ægeus was loth to part with his newly-found son, but at length he consented to the venture; and it was agreed that if Theseus succeeded in vanquishing the Minotaur and bringing back his comrades in safety, he should hoist white sails on his returning galley instead of the black ones which she had always borne in token of her melancholy mission.

So at length the sorrowful ship came to the harbour in the bay below broad Knossos where Minos reigned, and when the King had viewed his captives they were cast into prison to await their dreadful doom. But fair-haired Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, had marked Theseus as he stood before the King, and love to him had risen up in her heart, and pity at the thought of his fate; and so by night she came to his dungeon, and when she could not persuade him to save himself by flight, because that he had sworn to kill the Minotaur and save his companions, she gave him a clue of thread by which he might be able to retrace his way through all the dark and winding passages of the

Labyrinth, and a sword wherewith to deal with the Minotaur when he encountered him. So Theseus was led away by the guards, and put into the Labyrinth to meet his fate; and he went on, with the clue which he had fastened to his arm unwinding itself as he passed through passage after passage, until at last he met the dreadful monster; and there, in the depths of the Labyrinth, the Minotaur, who had slain so many, was himself slain. Then Theseus and his companions escaped, taking Ariadne with them, and fled to their black ship, and set sail for Attica again; and landing for awhile in the island of Naxos, Ariadne there became the hero's wife. But she never came to Athens with Theseus, but was either deserted by him in Naxos, or, as some say, was taken from him there by force. So, without her, Theseus sailed again for Athens. But in their excitement at the hope of seeing once more the home they had thought to have looked their last upon, he and his companions forgot to hoist the white sail; and old Ægeus, straining his eyes on Sunium day after day for the returning ship, saw her at last come back black-winged as he had feared; and in his grief he fell, or cast himself, into the sea, and so died, and thus the sea is called the Ægean to this day. Another tradition, recorded by the poet Bacchylides, tells how Theseus, at the challenge of Minos, descended to the palace of Amphitrite below the sea, and brought back with him the ring, 'the splendour of gold,' which the King had thrown into the deep.

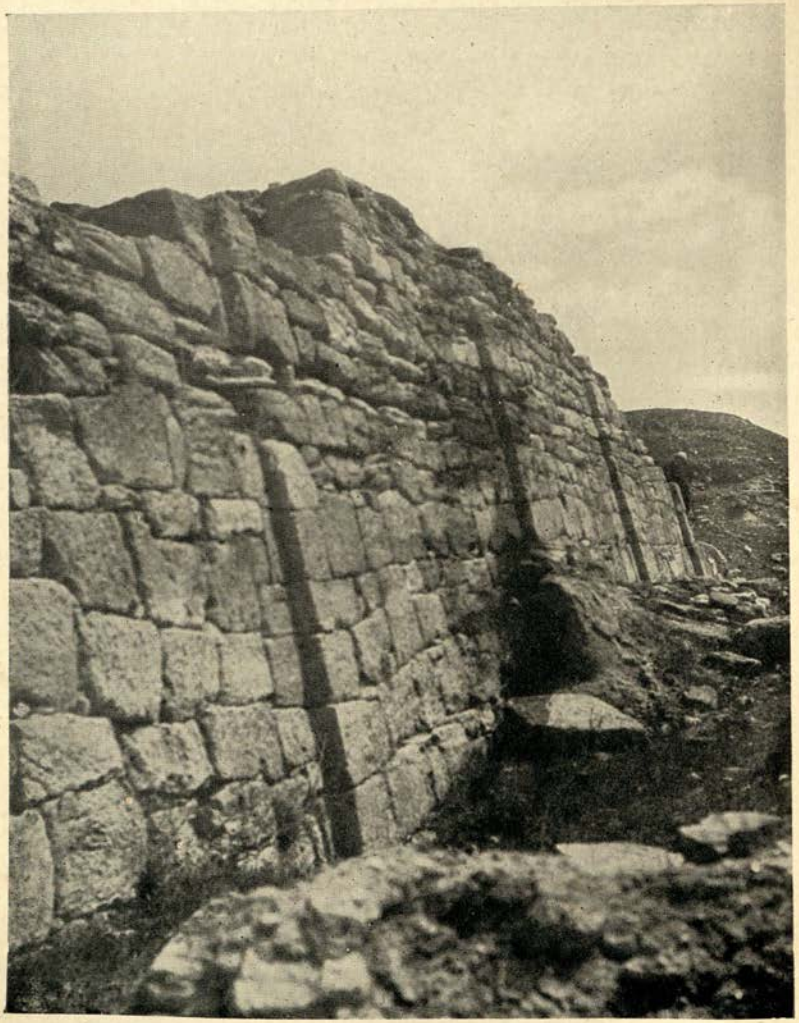
So runs the great story which links Minos and Crete with the favourite hero of Athens. But other legends, not so famous nor so romantic, carry on the story of the great Cretan King to a miserable close. Dædalus, his famous artificer, was also an Athenian, and the most cunning of all men. To him was ascribed the invention of the plumb-line and the auger, the wedge and the level; and it was he who first set masts in ships and bent sails upon them. But having slain, through jealousy, his nephew Perdix, who promised to excel him in skill, he was forced to flee from Athens, and so came to the Court of Minos. For the Cretan King he wrought many wonderful works, rearing for him the Labyrinth, and the Choros, or dancing-ground, which, as Homer tells us, he 'wrought in broad Knossos for fair-haired Ariadne.' But for his share in the great crime of Pasiphae Minos hated him, and shut him up in the Labyrinth which he himself had made. Then Dædalus made wings for himself and his son Icarus, and fastened them with wax, and together the two flew from their prison-house high above the pursuit of the King's war-fleet. But Icarus flew too near the sun, and the wax that fastened his wings melted, and he fell into the sea. So Dædalus alone came safely to Sicily, and was there hospitably received by King Kokalos of Kamikos, for whom, as for Minos, he executed many marvellous works. Then Minos, still thirsting for revenge, sailed with his fleet for Kamikos, to demand the surrender of Dædalus; and Kokalos,

affecting willingness to give up the fugitive, received Minos with seeming friendship, and ordered the bath to be prepared for his royal guest. But the three daughters of the Sicilian King, eager to protect Dædalus, drowned the Cretan in the bath, and so he perished miserably. And many of the men who had sailed with him remained in Sicily, and founded there a town which they named Minoa, in memory of their murdered King.

Herodotus has preserved for us another echo of the story of Minos in the shape of the reasons which led the Cretans to refuse aid to the rest of the Greeks during the Persian invasion. The Delphian oracle, which they consulted at this crisis, suggested to them that they had known enough of the misery caused by foreign expeditions. 'Fools, you complain of all the woes that Minos in his anger sent you, for aiding Menelaus, because they would not assist you in avenging his death at Kamikos, and yet you assisted them in avenging a woman who was carried off from Sparta by a barbarian.' In commentary on this saying Herodotus gives the explanation which was given to him by the inhabitants of Præsos, in Crete. After the death of Minos, the Cretans, with a great armada, invaded Sicily, and besieged Kamikos ineffectually for five years; but finding themselves unable to continue the siege, and being driven ashore on the Italian coast during their retreat, they founded there the city of Hyria. Crete, being thus left desolate, was repeopled by other tribes, 'especially the Grecians';

and in the third generation after the death of Minos the new Cretan people sent a contingent to help Agamemnon in the Trojan War, as a punishment for which famine and pestilence fell on them, and the island was depopulated a second time, so that the Cretans of the time of the Persian invasion are the third race to inhabit the island. In this tradition we may see a distorted reflection of the various vicissitudes which, as we shall see later, appear to have befallen the Minoan kingdom, and of the incursions which, after the fall of Knossos, gradually changed the character of the island population.

Such, then, are the most familiar of the legends and traditions associated with prehistoric Crete. Some of these, touching on the personality of Minos and his relationship with Zeus, have their own significance in connection with the little that is known of the Minoan religion, and will fall to be discussed later from that point of view. The famous story of Theseus and the Minotaur, though it, too, may have its connection with the religious conceptions which gather round the name of Minos, seems at first sight to move entirely in the realm of pure romance. Yet the conviction of its reality was very strong with the Athenians, and was indeed expressed in a ceremony which held its own to a late stage in Athenian history. The ship in which Theseus was said to have made his voyage was preserved with the utmost care till at least the beginning of the third century B.C., her timbers being constantly 'so pieced and new-framed with strong plank that it



WALL OF SIXTH CITY, TROY (*p.* 41)

afforded an example to the philosophers in their disputations concerning the identity of things that are changed by growth, some contending that it was the same, and others that it was not.' It was this galley, or the vessel which tradition affirmed to be the galley of Theseus, which was sent every year from Athens to Delos with solemn sacrifices and specially nominated envoys. One of her voyages has become for ever memorable owing to the fact that the death of Socrates was postponed for thirty days because of the galley's absence; for so great was the reverence in which this annual ceremony was held that during the time of her voyage the city was obliged to abstain from all acts carrying with them public impurity, so that it was not lawful to put a condemned man to death until the galley returned. The mere fact of such a tradition as that of the galley is at least presumptive evidence that some historic ground lay behind a belief so persistent, however the story may have been added to and adorned with supernatural details by later imagination; and it is difficult to see how Grote, on the very threshold of recounting the Athenians' conviction about the ship, and their solemn sacrificial use of her, should pause to reaffirm his unbelief in the existence of any historic ground for the main feature of the legend—the tribute of human victims paid by Athens to Crete.

Later Athenian writers of a rationalizing turn endeavoured to bring down the noble old legend to the level of the commonplace by transforming

the Minotaur into a mere general or famous athlete named Taurus, whom Theseus vanquished in Crete. But the rationalistic version never found much favour, and the Athenian potter was always sure of a market for his vases with pictures of the bull-headed Minotaur falling to the sword of the national hero. No more fortunate has been the German attempt to resolve the story of Minos and the Minotaur, the Labyrinth and Pasiphae, into a clumsy solar myth. The whole legend of the Minotaur, on this theory, was connected with the worship of the heavenly host. The Minotaur was the Sun; Pasiphae, 'the very bright one,' wife of Minos, was the Moon; and the Labyrinth was the tower on whose walls the astronomers of the day traced the wanderings of the heavenly bodies, 'an image of the starry heaven, with its infinitely winding paths, in which, nevertheless, the sun and moon so surely move about.' Among rationalizing explanations this must surely hold the palm for cumbrousness and complexity, and we may be thankful that the explorer's spade has demolished it along with other theories, and given back to us, as we shall see, at least the elements of a romance such as that which was so dear to the Athenian public.

CHAPTER II

THE HOMERIC CIVILIZATION

BETWEEN the Greece of such legends as those which we have been considering and the Greece of the earliest historic period there has always been a great gulf of darkness. On the one side a land of seemingly fabulous Kings and heroes and monsters, of fabulous palaces and cities; on the other side, Greece as we know it in the infant stages of its development, with a totally different state of society, a totally different organization and culture; and in the interval no one could say how many generations, concerning which, and their conditions and developments, there was nothing but blank ignorance. So that it seemed as though the marvellous fabric of Greek civilization as we know it were indeed something unexampled, rising almost at once out of nothing to its height of splendour, as the walls of Ilium were fabled to have risen beneath the hands of their divine builders. Indeed, a certain section of students seemed rather to glory in the fact of this seeming isolation of Greek culture, and to deem it little short of profanity to seek any pre-existing

sources for it. 'The fathering of the Greek on the pre-existing profane cultures has been scouted by perfervid Hellenists in terms which implied that they hold it little else than impiety. Allowing no causation more earthly than vague local influences of air and light, mountain and sea, they would have Hellenism born into the world by a miracle of generation, like its own Athena from the head of Zeus.'* But a great civilization can never be accounted for in this miraculous fashion. The origins of even Egyptian culture have begun to yield themselves to patient research, and it is not permissible to believe that the Greek nation was born in a day into its great inheritance, or that it derived nothing from earlier ages and races.

Indeed, the supreme monument of the matchless literature of Hellas bore witness to the fact that, prior to the beginnings of Greek history, there had existed on Greek soil a civilization of a very high type, differing from, in some respects even superior to, that which succeeded it, but manifestly refusing to be left out of consideration in any attempt to describe the beginnings of Greek culture. The Homeric poems shone like a beacon light across the dark gulf which separated the Hellas of myth from the Hellas of history, testifying to a splendour that had been before the darkness, and prophesying of a splendour that should be when the darkness had passed. But the very brilliance of their pictures and the magnificence of the society with which they dealt

* D. G. Hogarth, 'Ionia and the East,' p. 21.

only added to the complication of the question, and emphasized the difficulty of deriving the culture of historic Greece by legitimate filiation from a past which seemed to have no connection and no community of character with it. For the Homeric civilization was not a different stage of development of that same civilization which appears when the first beginnings of what we are accustomed to call Hellenism are presented to us; it was totally diverse, and in many respects more complex and more splendid.

From the eighth century onwards we are on moderately safe ground when dealing with the history of Hellas and its culture. We know something of the actual facts of its history, literary and political. The chronicles of the more important cities are known with a definiteness fairly comparable to what we might expect at such a stage of development. But the Homeric poems take us away from all that into a world in which a totally different state of things prevails. The very geography is not that of the historical Hellenic period. The names that are familiar to us as those of the chief Greek cities and states are of comparatively minor importance in the Homeric world; Athens is mentioned, but not with any prominence; Corinth is merely a dependency of its neighbour Mycenæ; Sparta only ranks along with other towns of Laconia; Delphi and Olympia have not yet assumed anything like the place which they afterwards occupy as religious centres during the historic period. The chief cities of Hellas are

Mycenæ, Tiryns, and Orchomenos. Crete, although its chiefs, Idomeneus and Meriones, are only of secondary rank among the heroes of the Iliad, is obviously one of the most important of Grecian lands. It sends eighty ships to the Achæan fleet at Troy, it is described both in the Iliad and the Odyssey as being very populous (a hundred cities, Iliad II.; ninety cities, Odyssey XIX.), and to its capital, Knossos, alone among Greek cities does Homer apply the epithet 'great.' All which offers a striking contrast to the comparative insignificance of the towns of the Argolid in later Greek history, and to the uninfluential part played by Crete.

The centres of power, then, in the Homeric story are widely different from those of the historic period. The same divergence from later realities is manifest when we come to look at the social organization contemplated in the Iliad and the Odyssey. The Homeric state of society is, in some respects, rude enough. Piracy, for instance, is recognized as, if not a laudable, at all events a quite ordinary method of gaining a livelihood. 'Who are you?' says Nestor to Telemachus. 'Whence do you come? Are you engaged in trade, or do you rove at adventure as sea-robbers who wander at hazard of their lives, bringing bane to strangers?' The same question is addressed to Odysseus by Polyphemus, and was plainly the first thing thought of when a seafaring stranger was encountered. As among the Highlanders and Borderers of Scotland, cattle-lifting was looked upon as a perfectly respectable form of

employment, and stolen cattle were considered a quite proper gift for a prospective bridegroom to offer to his father-in-law. The power of the strong hand was, in most respects, supreme, and the rights of a tribe or a city were respected more on account of the ability of its men to defend them than because of any moral obligation. 'We will sack a town for you,' says Menelaus to Telemachus, as an inducement to him to settle in Laconia.

Along with this primitive rudeness goes, on the other hand, a strongly aristocratic constitution of society. The great leaders and chiefs, the long-haired Achæans, are absolutely separated from the common people, not in rank only, but to all appearance in race. They are a superior caste, and of a different breed. Even to their King their subjection is not much more than nominal, and he has to be very careful of offending their susceptibilities or wounding their sense of their own importance, while their treatment of the commons beneath them is sufficiently disdainful. Though the commons are summoned sometimes to the Council, their function there is merely a passive one; they are called to hear what has been determined, and to approve of it, if they so desire, but in no case have they any alternative to accepting it, even should they disapprove. Altogether the superiority of the Achæan nobles, and the haughtiness with which they bear themselves, is such as to suggest that they hold the position, not of tribal chieftains ruling over clansmen of the same stock as themselves, but of a separate

and conquering race holding dominion over, and using the services of, the vanquished, much after the manner of the Norman lordship in Sicily.

All this is sufficiently different from the state of things during the historic period. It is not an undeveloped condition of the same society that is in contemplation; it is a totally distinct social organization. With regard to the position of woman, the facts are even more remarkable, for if the Homeric picture be a true one, historic Hellas, instead of representing an advance upon the prehistoric age, presents a distinct retrogression. In the Homeric poems woman occupies a position, not only important, but even comparable in many respects to that held by her in modern life. She is not secluded from sight and kept in the background, as in later Hellenic society; on the contrary, she mixes freely with the other sex in private and in public, and is uniformly depicted as exercising a very strong, and generally beneficent, influence. The very names of Andromache, Penelope, Nausicaa, stand as types of all that is purest and sweetest in womanhood. The fact that a wife is purchased by bride-gifts does not militate against the respect in which she is held or the regard which is paid to her rights. The contrast between this state of affairs and that prevailing in later Greek society is sufficiently marked to render comment unnecessary.

But perhaps the most striking feature of the setting of the Homeric story is the type of material civilization which is described in the poems. We

are confronted with a society not by any means in a primitive stage of development, but, on the contrary, far advanced in the arts of peace, and capable of the highest achievements in art and architecture. Some of the proofs of its advancement may be briefly noticed. Into the vexed question of the Homeric palace, its form, and the conditions of life thereby indicated, there is no need to enter; for about the point which chiefly concerns our immediate purpose there is no question at all. The Homeric palace, described at some length in at least three instances, is a building not merely large and commodious, but of somewhat imposing magnificence. The palace of Alcinous, for example, is pictured for us as gleaming with the splendour of the sun and moon, with walls of bronze, a frieze of *kuanos* (blue glass paste), and golden doors, with lintels and door-posts of silver, while the approaches to it are guarded by dogs wrought in silver. The whole reminds one rather of the description of one of the vast Egyptian temples of the Eighteenth or Nineteenth Dynasty than of what one would have imagined the palace of an island chieftain. The Palaces of Priam at Troy, and of Odysseus at Ithaca, less gorgeously adorned in detail, are not less stately, and even the abode of Menelaus in comparatively insignificant Sparta is described as 'gleaming with gold, amber, silver, and ivory.' The minor appointments of these splendid homes are in keeping with their structural magnificence. Great vessels of gold, silver, and bronze are in common use, the richly dyed and wrought robes

of the chiefs and their wives and daughters are stored in chests splendidly decorated and inlaid, and the adornments of the women are of costly and beautiful fabric in gold and silver. In the manners and customs of the inhabitants of these stately houses there is a certain patriarchal simplicity. The Princess Nausicaa, daughter of King Alcinous, conducts the family washing as a regular and expected part of her work, while the great chieftains themselves are men of their hands not only on the battle-field, but in the common labours of peace. Odysseus is a capable ploughman, carpenter, and shipwright, as well as a good soldier. But the simplicity is by no means rudeness; it consists with a highly developed code of manners, and even a considerable refinement. Brutes like Penelope's suitors may, in half-drunken anger, fling the furniture or an ox-hoof at the object of their scorn; but there are brutes in every society, and the manners of the Achæans in general are stately and dignified.

On the field of war there is still evidence of an advanced stage of civilization. The whole question of the equipment of the Homeric heroes has been the subject of perhaps even more dispute than that of the Homeric house. Infinite pains have been spent in the effort to show, on the one hand, that the equipment worn by the heroes of the Iliad was of the more ancient type, consisting mainly of a great shield of ox-hide large enough to cover the whole body, behind which the warrior crouched, wearing for defensive armour no more than a linen

corselet and leathern cap and gaiters, and on the other that the hero wore practically the complete panoply of the later Hellenic hoplite, the small round shield, the bronze helmet, with metal cuirass, belt, and greaves ; while the question of whether the offensive weapons were of iron or of bronze has been debated with equal pertinacity. The discussion of such details is beyond our purpose, and it is sufficient to say that the poems seem to contemplate both forms of defensive equipment, the old form of large shield and light body armour, and the later form of small shield and metal panoply, as being in common use, while on the question of iron versus bronze, the evidence seems to indicate that the age contemplated by the bulk of the references is, in the main, a bronze-using one, though the knowledge of the superiority of iron is beginning to make itself evident.

But the point which is of importance for our present purpose is the magnificence with which the arms of the Hellenic heroes, when of metal, are wrought and decorated. The polished helmets, with their horse-hair plumes of various colours, the inwrought breastplates, and the greaves with their silver fastenings, are not only weapons, but works of art as well. The supreme instance is, of course, the armour of Achilles, fabricated, according to the poet, by the hands of Hephæstos, but none the less to be regarded as the ideal of what the highly wrought armour of the time should be. The shield of Achilles, with its gorgeous representations of various

scenes of peace and war, seems almost to transcend the possibilities of actual metal work at such a period; yet we may believe that the poet was not merely drawing upon his imagination, but giving a heightened picture of what he had himself witnessed in the way of the armourer's art. Chiefly to be noticed with regard to it is the way in which he describes the method used by Hephæstos in producing his effects—the inlaying of various metals to get the colours desired, for instance, in the vineyard scene with its dangling clusters of purple grapes, its poles, and ditch, and fence. Would any poet have imagined this had he been entirely unacquainted with similar products of the armourer's art? As we shall see, it is precisely this use of the inlaying of metal with metal, to represent the different colours of the various figures involved, which is characteristic of the skilled armourer's work in the Mycenæan period.

Such, then, are a few of the outstanding features of the state of society described for us in the Homeric poems. We are brought by them face to face with a civilization which has very distinct and pronounced characteristics of its own. It is certainly not the civilization of the earliest historic period of Greece; political organization, the relative importance of states and cities, social life, art and warfare—all are different from anything we find in the Hellas of history; in many respects this world of the poems is at a higher stage of development than that which succeeded it; but certainly it is

different. Now, the question of importance for us is —Had this poetic world of the Iliad and Odyssey any basis in fact, or was it merely the creation of the poet or poets who were responsible for the tales of Ilium and of Odysseus? Were they describing things which they had seen, or of which the tradition at least had been handed down to them by those who had seen them, or were they telling of things which never had any existence save in their own minds?

This question, of course, is plainly quite distinct from that of whether the tales they tell are history or romance. The stories of the flight of Helen, of the siege of Troy, the anger of Achilles, the valour of Hector, and the love of Andromache, of the wanderings of much-enduring Odysseus, and the trials of his faithful wife, Penelope, may be fact, or they may be fiction, or, more probably perhaps than either, they may be fact largely mingled with fiction; but that is not the point. It is the medium in which these stories are set, the background of human life and society upon which they are projected. Here is a world, astonishingly real in appearance, and, if real, supremely interesting to us, as representing what the subsequent ages knew or had heard by tradition of the earliest phases of the greatest European civilization. Can we trust the picture, or must we believe it to be but a dream of a state of things which never really existed? It is, to say the least of it, extremely hard to believe that the Homeric world is entirely the product of the

poetic imagination. Imagination can work wonders, but it requires to have a certain amount of material in fact to start upon in its workings. If it creates a world entirely out of its own consciousness, that world may be one of extreme beauty and splendour, but it is most unlikely that it will present any verisimilitude to actual life. It will be either vague and shadowy, or else so grandiose and unearthly in its magnificence as to have no point of connection with ordinary terrestrial life. But it is exactly here that the realism of the Homeric world strikes the student. It is not vague—on the contrary, the preciseness of its detail is almost as striking, sometimes almost as prosaic, as the detail which makes Robinson Crusoe the most realistic of all works of fiction; and while its splendours are such as we look for in vain in early historic Greece, and are certainly not borrowed from the great civilizations of Mesopotamia or the Nile Valley, they are such as we can perfectly well believe to have existed, and such as can be perfectly well paralleled, though in widely different styles, by Babylonia or by Thebes.

Was it not more likely that a picture so precise in its outlines, and so coherent, so thinkable and possible even in its most gorgeous details, should have had behind it something, probably a great deal, of fact actually seen and known, than that it should have been the mere mirage of a poet's dream? 'The picture presented to us of the Homeric heroes and their surroundings,' says Father Browne, 'is not merely vivid and complete; it is grand, though

with a grandeur which is homely and simple. Hence the fascination which we find in the subject of the poems as distinct from the poems themselves. It may be that this effect is due to the art of the bards, which well knew how to efface itself in order to ravish the listener the more. But allowing much to the power of art, the mind was not yet satisfied. We have said the poems seemed to carry with them their own evidence that they were not undiluted fiction, but contained at least an element of objective, perhaps traditional, truth. It was a beautiful world they told of, and yet it was a world apart. Agamemnon in the field and Achilles in his tent; Priam in his palace; Odysseus in his travels; Alcinous with his retainers, and Arete with her daughter; Penelope and Telemachus in the midst of the wicked suitors, and the old swineherd and the faithful nurse; the very shades of the Dead beyond the streams of Oceanus—how could the bards describe all these wonders if they had not lived in a world of their own, or at least acquired the knowledge of it from their immediate predecessors? The gorgeous palaces of the Kings, with their walls of bronze, their gold and silver ewers and basins, and their carven bedsteads and chairs of state and footstools; and all the glittering raiment and the golden-studded sceptres, and golden-hilted swords, and silvern ankle-bands, and the ivory and amber and inlaid metal-work, and the iron-axled chariots with eight spokes to the wheel, and the crimson-cheeked ships and the fair-cheeked maidens, and

the stateliness and grace amid the splendour of it all—why should we obstinately refuse to believe that these bards knew more than we—that they had seen the vision with their mortal eye before they took the brush in hand to paint the picture?'*

Two lines of evidence, then, if given their fair weight, seemed to point in the same direction. On the one hand, there were the legends of a prehistoric age of heroes, with their travels and expeditions and wars, legends with which Greek literature teemed, and which, however inextricably blended with fancy, and with details obviously monstrous and impossible, can scarcely be supposed to have sprung into being without something behind them to account for their existence. On the other hand, there was this strange, wonderful, realistic world of the Homeric poems, no longer existing, it is true, even at the earliest stage of Greek history, but almost absolutely refusing to be dismissed as a mere figment of the imagination. Was it, then, impossible to believe that in the bosom of the great gulf which separated the Hellas of legend from the Hellas of history there lay a civilization, real, and once living, of which the legends and the Homeric pictures preserved but the scanty surviving ruins and relics?

Here we have to recall two facts of importance. First, that universal Greek tradition affirmed that before the birth of historic Greece there lay a Dark Age, its darkness caused by the descent from the

* H. Browne, 'Homeric Study,' pp. 242, 243.



THE LION GATE, MYCENÆ (*p.* 42)

North of the rude, iron-using Dorian tribes, who found in the lands which they invaded a civilization of the Bronze Age, far more advanced than their own, and, by the help of their superior weapons, conquered and indeed destroyed it. And second, that even in the gorgeous picture given by the Homeric poems of the period with which they deal, there is a constant tendency to regard that period as being only the decadent and inferior heir of a civilization which had preceded it. Nothing is plainer in Homer than the suggestion that the men of the age before the Trojan Wars were greater, stronger, wiser, better in every respect than even the heroes who fought on 'the ringing plains of windy Troy,' even as these were greater than the men of the poet's own degenerate days. Does it not seem as though we were being led towards the conclusion that the Homeric civilization is itself the representation of a very real fact of history, the picture of a state of things which was submerged and swept away by the coming of the Dorians, or by whatever inrush of wild northern tribes the Greeks may have called by that general title, but which was itself only the last decadent stage of an antecedent culture, still greater and more highly developed—that of the legendary period? The answer to this question has come in the most surprising and romantic fashion from the archæological discoveries of the last forty years.

CHAPTER III

SCHLIEMANN AND HIS WORK

THE man whose labours were to give a new impetus to the study of Greek origins, and to be the beginning of the revelation of an unknown world of ancient days, was born on January 6, 1822, at Neu Buckow in Mecklenburg-Schwerin. He was the son of a clergyman who himself had a deep love for the great tales of antiquity, for his son has told how his father used often vividly to narrate the stories of the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and of the Trojan War. When Schliemann was barely seven years old he received a present of a child's history of the world, in which the picture of the destruction of Troy and the flight of Æneas made a profound impression upon his young mind, and roused in him a passionate desire to go and see for himself what remained of the ancient splendours of Ilium. He found it impossible to believe that the massive fortifications of Troy had vanished without leaving a trace of their existence. When his father admitted that the walls were once as huge as those depicted in his history book, but asserted that they

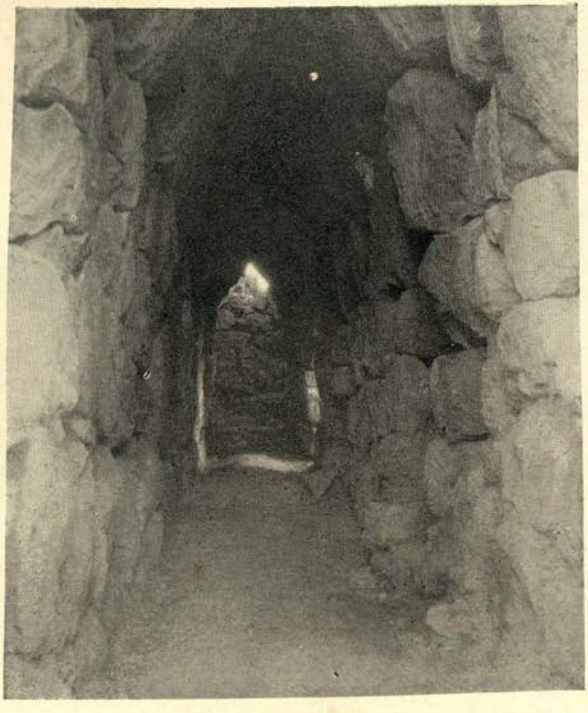
were now totally destroyed, he retorted : 'Father, if such walls once existed, they cannot possibly have been completely destroyed ; vast ruins of them must still remain, but they are hidden beneath the dust of ages.' Already he had made the resolution that some day he would excavate Troy.

The romance of bygone days and of hidden treasure surrounded the boy's early years, and no doubt had its own influence in determining his bent. A pond just behind his father's garden had its legend of a maiden who rose from its waters each midnight, bearing a silver bowl. In the village an ancient barrow had its story of a robber knight who had buried his favourite child there in a golden cradle ; and near by was the old castle of Henning von Holstein, who, when besieged by the Duke of Mecklenburg, had buried his treasures close to the keep of his stronghold. On such romantic legends Schliemann's young imagination was nourished. By the time he was ten years old he had produced a Latin essay on the Trojan War. Such things, which in another might have been mere childish precocities, were in him the indications of an enthusiasm for antiquity, which was destined to be the ruling passion of his whole life.

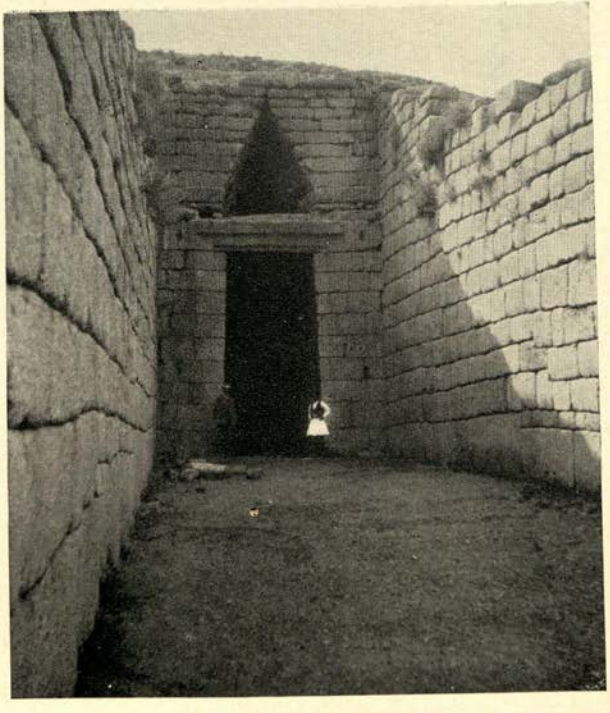
Yet the beginnings of his career in the world were unromantic to the last degree. His father's poverty forced him to give up the hope of a learned life, and at the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to a small grocer in a country village, in whose employment, surely uncongenial enough for such a

spirit, he spent five and a half years, selling butter, herrings, potato-brandy and the like, and occupying his spare moments in tidying out the little shop. Even in such circumstances his passion for the Homeric story found means, sufficiently quaint, for its gratification. There came one evening to the shop a miller's man, who had been well educated, but had fallen into poor circumstances, and had taken to drink, yet even in his degradation had not forgotten his Homer. 'That evening,' says Schliemann, 'he recited to us about a hundred lines of the poet, observing the rhythmic cadence of the verses. Although I did not understand a syllable, the melodious sound of the words made a deep impression upon me, and I wept bitter tears over my unhappy fate. Three times over did I get him to repeat to me those divine verses, rewarding his trouble with three glasses of whisky, which I bought with the few pence that made up my whole wealth. From that moment I never ceased to pray God that by His grace I might yet have the happiness of learning Greek.'

To one whose heart was filled with such a passion for learning, no obstacle could prove insuperable. Yet for many a day the Fates seemed most unpropitious. Ill-health drove him to emigrate to Venezuela, but his ship was wrecked on the Dutch coast, and he became the errand-boy of a business house in Amsterdam. Here in his first year of service he managed, while going on his master's errands, to learn English in the first six months and



VAULTED PASSAGE IN WALL, TIRYNS (*p.* 49)



BEEHIVE TOMB (TREASURY OF ATREUS), MYCENÆ (*p.* 46)

French in the next, and incidentally to save for intellectual purposes one half of his salary of 800 francs. The mental training of the first year enabled him to learn Dutch, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese with much greater rapidity, each language being acquired in six weeks. In 1846 he was sent by another firm as their agent to St. Petersburg, where in the next year he founded a business house of his own, and from that time all went well with him. The Crimean War brought him opportunities which he utilized with such ingenuity as to derive considerable profit from them. By 1858 he considered that the fortune he had made was sufficient to warrant him in devoting himself entirely to archæology, and though exceptional circumstances obliged him to return to business for a little, he finally cut himself loose from it in 1863, and took up the task which was to occupy the remainder of his busy life.

His Greek studies had led him to two convictions on which his whole exploring work was based. First, that the site of ancient Troy was on the spot called in classical days New Ilium, the Hill of Hissarlik, near the coast of the Ægean; and second, that the Greek traveller, Pausanias, was right in stating that the murdered Agamemnon and his kin were buried within the walls of the Acropolis at Mycenæ, and not without it. In both these opinions he ran counter to the prevailing views of his time. It was generally believed that, if Troy had ever any real existence at all, its site was to be looked for not

at Hissarlik, but far inland near Bunarbashi; while the authority of Pausanias as to the graves of the Atreidæ was held to be quite unreliable.

Schliemann resolved to put his convictions to the test of actual excavation. In April, 1870, he cut the first sod of his excavation at Hissarlik. The work went on with varying, but never brilliant, fortune, until the year 1873, when his faith and constancy began at last to meet with their reward. On the south-west of the site a great city gate was uncovered, lines of wall, already partly disclosed, began to show themselves more plainly, and quite close to the gate there was discovered the famous 'Treasure of Priam,' so called, a considerable mass of vessels and ornaments in gold and silver, with a number of spearheads, axes, daggers, and cups, wrought in copper. As the excavations progressed, it became evident that not one city, but many cities, had stood upon this ancient site. The First City, reached, of course, at the lowest level of the excavation, immediately above the virgin soil, belonged to a very early stage of human development. Its remains yielded such objects as stone axes and flint knives, together with the black, hand-made, polished pottery, known as 'bucchero,' which is characteristic of Neolithic sites in the Ægean, ornamented frequently with incised patterns which are filled in with a white chalky substance. The stratum of débris belonging to the First City averages about 8 feet in depth.

Above this lay a layer of soil about 1 foot 9 inches

in depth, and then, on the top of a great layer of débris, by which the site had been levelled and extended, came the walls of the Second City. Here were the remains of a fortified gate with a ramp, paved with stone, leading up to it (Plate II. 1), and a strong wall of sun-dried brick resting upon a scarped stone substructure. This, with its projecting towers, had evidently once formed the enclosure of an Acropolis; and within the wall lay the remains of a large building which appeared to have been a house or palace. The separate finds included the great treasure already mentioned, and numerous other articles of use and adornment, golden hair-pins, bracelets, ear-pendants, a very primitive leaden idol of female form, and abundance of pottery, of which some specimens belong to the class of vases with long spouts, known to archæologists as 'Schnabelkanne,' or 'beak-jugs.' Above the stratum of the Second City lay the remains of no fewer than seven other settlements, more or less clearly marked, ending at the uppermost layer with the ruins of Roman Ilium, and its marble temple of Athena.

The gate and walls of the Second City—the fact that it had been undoubtedly destroyed by fire, and the evidence of wealth and artistic faculty offered by the golden treasure—seemed to Dr. Schliemann decisive evidence of the fact that this had been the Ilion of the Homeric poems. The treasure was named 'Priam's Treasure,' the largest building, 'Priam's Palace,' and the gate, 'The Scæan Gate.'

It quickly became apparent, however, that the Second City could not claim Homeric honours, but must be of yet more venerable antiquity. The style, alike of the city buildings and of the articles found, was much too primitive for the Homeric period, and pointed to a date much earlier—probably, indeed, about a thousand years earlier than that of the Trojan War. The great treasure, whose workmanship seemed to militate against this conclusion, was suspected to have somehow slipped down during the excavations from the level of the Sixth City to that of the Second, as it seemed impossible that such fine work could belong to the very early period of the Burnt City ; but subsequent discoveries, particularly those of Mr. Seager on the little island of Mokhlos, off the coast of Crete, have paralleled the splendour of the Trojan treasure with work which is undoubtedly of the same early date as the Second City, so that Schliemann's accuracy has been confirmed in this instance. The citadel itself seemed far too small to fill the place which Troy occupies in Homer's description, even allowing for poetic exaggeration. In 1890, the year of his death, Schliemann was on the way to the solution of the problem, and in 1892, his coadjutor, Professor Dörpfeld, finally proved that the Sixth City, lying four strata above Schliemann's Troy, was the true Ilion of the great epic. Its wider circuit had been missed by Schliemann in his earlier excavations owing to the fact that, at the centre of the site where he was working, the débris had been planed and

levelled away by the Romans to make room for the buildings of their New Ilium. The pottery of the Sixth City was of the type which in the meantime had come to be called Mycenæan, from the discoveries in the plain of Argos, and its massive circuit wall, enclosing an area two and a half times greater than that of the Second City, is quite worthy of the fame of Homeric Troy. Without much risk of mistake, we may conclude that we have before us in Plate III. the actual wall from whose summit Andromache beheld the corpse of the gallant Hector dragged behind the chariot of his relentless foe. The mere fact of his having to some extent misinterpreted the evidence of his discoveries can scarcely be said, however, to take anything from the credit justly due to Schliemann. Had he been spared for but a year or two longer he could not have failed to complete his work, and to prove, as his fellow-worker did, that on the site which he had from the first contended to be that of Troy, there had stood a large and splendidly built city, which assuredly belongs to the period of the Trojan War.

The work at Troy, however, had not gone on uninterruptedly between 1870 and Schliemann's death in 1890, and the discoveries which occupied some of the intervening years were of even greater scientific importance, though the glamour of romance attaching to the name of Troy drew perhaps more attention to the work there. A dispute with the Turkish Government over the disposal of 'Priam's Treasure' led to obstacles being placed by the

Porte in the way of the resumption of work on the plain of Troy, and in July, 1876, he settled down to excavate at Mycenæ, the historic capital of the King of men, Agamemnon, with a view to the proving of his second theory—the burial of the Atreidæ within the Acropolis of Mycenæ. The ancient citadel of Agamemnon stands in the plain of Argos, on an isolated hill 912 feet in height. Before Schliemann turned his attention to it, it was already well known to students of archæology from the remains of its walls, and particularly from the splendid Lion Gate (Plate IV.) with its famous relief of the sacred pillar supported by two colossal lions, and from the great beehive tombs of the lower city—the so-called 'Treasuries.' But the chief thing which drew the explorer to Mycenæ was not these remains; it was the statement of Pausanias already referred to. 'Some remains of the circuit wall,' says Pausanias, 'are still to be seen, and the gate which has lions over it. These were built, they say, by the Cyclopes, who made the wall at Tiryns for Proitos. Among the ruins at Mycenæ is the fountain called Perseia, and some subterranean buildings belonging to Atreus and his children, where their treasures were kept. There is the tomb of Atreus, and of those whom Aigisthos slew at the banquet, on their return from Ilion with Agamemnon. . . . There is also the tomb of Agamemnon, and that of Eurymedon the charioteer, and the joint tomb of Teledamos and Pelops, the twin children of Kassandra, whom Aigisthos slew

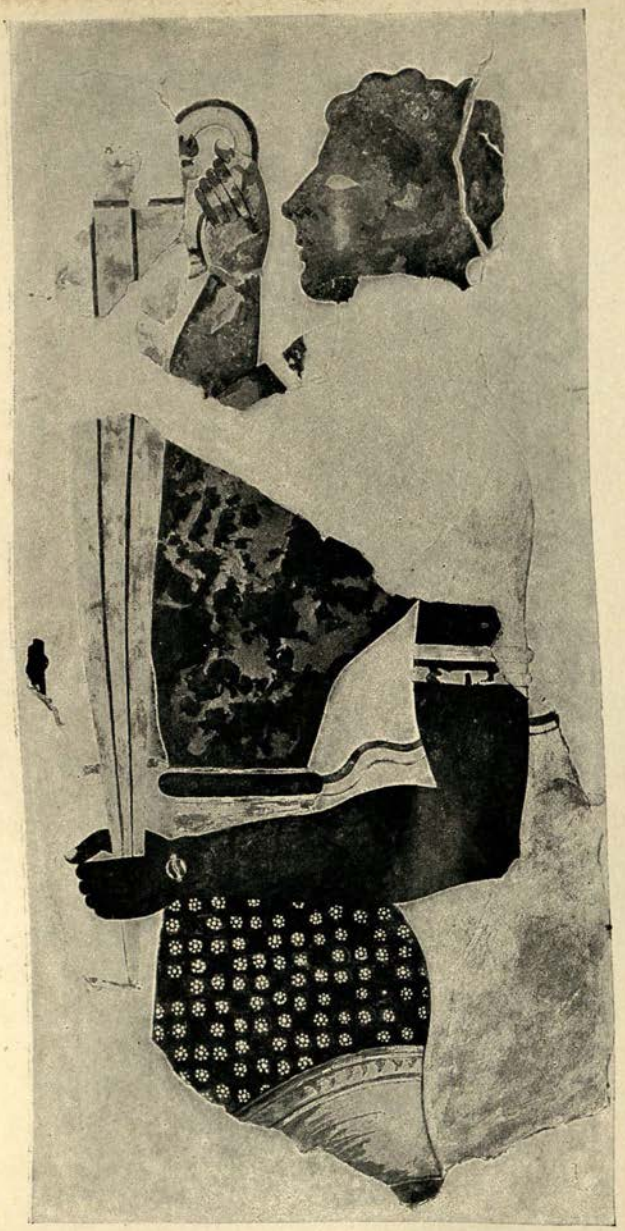
with their parents while still mere babes. . . . Klytemnestra and Aigisthos were buried a little way outside the walls, for they were not thought worthy to be within, where Agamemnon lay and those who fell with him.'

Persuaded in his own mind of the truth of this statement, Schliemann, while clearing the Lion Gate, and investigating the already rifled tomb known as the Treasury of Atreus, caused a great pit, 113 feet square, to be dug within the walls at a distance of about 40 feet from the Lion Gate. With the most extraordinary good fortune he had hit upon the exact spot which he sought, and had even almost exactly proportioned his pit to the area within which the treasures lay. After only a few days' digging, slabs of stone, vertically placed, began to come to light, and before long a complete double ring of stone slabs, 87 feet in diameter, was disclosed (Plate II. 2). Schliemann's first idea was that he had discovered the Agora of Mycenæ, the 'well-polished circle of stones' on which the elders of the city sat for council or judgment, as Hephæstos depicted them on the shield of Achilles; but even this discovery did not satisfy him; he was resolved to go down to virgin soil or rock, and his perseverance was rewarded.

First there came into view a circular altar, and several steles of soft stone with rude carvings in relief, which seemed to point to interments beneath, and a system of offerings to, or on behalf of, the dead. Three feet below the altar, and 23 feet

below the surface level, there came to light the top of the first of a group of five rock-hewn graves. The graves were rectangular, varied in depth from 10 to 16 feet, and ranged in size from 9 by 10 feet to 16 by 22 feet. They had been carefully lined with a wall of small quarry-stones and clay, and roofed over with slate slabs; but the roofing had broken down, owing to the decay of the beams which supported it, and the graves were filled with earth and pebbles. Mingled with the débris brought down by the collapse of the roofs lay human bodies, one in the smallest grave, five in the largest, and three in each of the others; and along with them had been buried one of the most remarkable hoards of treasure that ever greeted the eye of a discoverer.

Gold was there in profusion, beaten into masks for the faces of the dead (perhaps to protect them from the evil eye), into head-bands, breast-pieces, plaques of all shapes and sizes, and wrought into bracelets, rings, pins, baldrics, and dagger and sword hilts. Along with the gold was store of wrought ivory, amber, silver, bronze, and alabaster. One grave alone contained no fewer than sixty swords and daggers; another, in which women only were buried, held six diadems, fifteen pendants, eleven neck-coils, eight hair ornaments, ten gold grasshoppers with gold chains, one butterfly, four griffins, four lions, ten ornaments, each consisting of two stags, ten with representations of two lions attacking an ox, three fine intaglios, two pairs of



THE CUP-BEARER, KNOSSOS (*p.* 67)

From 'The Palace of Minos,' by Arthur J. Evans, in *The Monthly Review*

gold scales, fifty-one embossed ornaments, and more than seven hundred ornaments for sewing on garments! A few scattered objects and a sixth grave were found later, the latter, however, not by Dr. Schliemann. The mere money-value of the finds amounted to something like four thousand pounds sterling!

Money-value, however, was nothing in Schliemann's eyes compared with the thought that he had discovered the actual graves which Pausanias saw, and in which Agamemnon and his companions were buried after their tragic end at the hands of Aigisthos and Klytemnestra. To his eager enthusiasm many of the circumstances of the discovery seemed to lend probability to such a supposition. The disorder in which the bodies were found, one with its head crushed down upon the bosom, the half-shut eye of one of the mute company, and other indications, seemed to point to such haste in the interment as might have been expected in the case of a King and his companions who had met with so tragic a fate. Accordingly, the discoverer announced in his famous telegram to the King of the Hellenes, and maintained in his works, that he had found Agamemnon and his household. For a time this view and his enthusiastic advocacy of it gained the ear of the public; but gradually it became apparent that the disorder of the graves and the condition of the corpses was due, not to hasty interment, but to the collapse of the roofs of the graves; the grave furniture was shown not to belong by any means

entirely to one period; and the number and sex of the persons interred did not agree with the legend, or with the account of Pausanias. Admiration turned to incredulity, and even to undeserved ridicule of the enthusiastic explorer; but the lapse of time has made critics less inclined to mock at Schliemann's eager belief, and it is largely conceded now that while perhaps the tombs may not be actually those of the great King of the Achæans and his friends, they are at least those which were long held to be such by tradition, and which Pausanias intended to denote by his descriptions. In any case, the question of whether the explorer discovered the body of one dead King or of another is of entirely minor importance. To find Agamemnon would have been a romantic exploit thoroughly in accordance with the bent of Schliemann's mind, and a fitting crown to a life which in itself was the very romance of exploration. But Schliemann had done something infinitely more important than to make the find of a dead King, even though that King had reigned for more than two and a half millenniums in the greatest poem of the world; he had begun the resurrection of a dead civilization.

Besides the great discovery of the Shaft-Graves, Schliemann carried on the exploration of the famous beehive tombs in the lower city of Mycenæ. One of these, the largest, was already well known by the name of the 'Treasury of Atreus' (Plate V. 2). It consists of a long entrance passage running back into the hillside, and leading to a great vaulted

chamber excavated out of the hill, and shaped like a beehive. The entrance passage is 20 feet broad and 115 feet long, and is lined on either side with walls of massive masonry which increase in height as the hill rises. This passage leads to a vertical façade 46 feet high, pierced by a door between 17 and 18 feet in height, which was bordered by columns carrying a cornice, above which was a triangular relieving space, masked by slabs of red porphyry adorned with spiral decorations, while the whole façade appears to have been enriched with bronze ornaments and coloured marbles. The massive lintel of the door is 29 feet 6 inches long, 16 feet 6 inches deep, and 3 feet 4 inches high, with a weight of about 120 tons—a mass of stone fairly comparable with some of the gigantic blocks in which Egyptian architects delighted. It is, for instance, about ten tons heavier than the quartzite block which forms the sepulchral chamber in the pyramid of Amenemhat III. at Hawara. The great chamber of the tomb consists of an impressive circular vault 48 feet in diameter and in height. Its construction is not that of true vaulting; but each of the thirty-three courses projects a little beyond the one below it, until at last they approach closely at the apex, which is closed by a single slab. The courses, after being laid, were hewn to a perfectly smooth curve, and carefully polished, and it appears that the whole of the dome was decorated with rosettes of bronze, a scheme of adornment which recalls the bronze walls of the Palace of Alcinous.

From the great chamber a side door, bearing traces of rich decoration, leads to a square room, 27 feet square by 19 feet high, which may possibly have been the actual place of interment. Curtius found 'this lofty and solemn vault' the most imposing of all the monuments of ancient Greece.

In the same hillside as the Treasury of Atreus, but some 400 yards north of it, stands the tomb known as the 'Tomb of Klytemnestra,' or 'Mrs. Schliemann's Treasury'—the latter title being due to the fact that it was partially excavated in 1876 by Dr. Schliemann's wife. In size it very closely corresponds to the better known tomb, while its columns of dark green alabaster, its door-lintel of leek-green marble, and the slabs of red marble which closed the relieving triangle above the door show that it had been not less magnificent than its neighbour.

Following up his excavations at Mycenæ, Schliemann, in 1880-81, excavated at Orchomenos in Bœotia the so-called 'Treasury of Minyas,' discovering in its square side-chamber a beautiful ceiling formed of slabs of slate sculptured with an exquisite pattern of rosettes and spirals, which shows very distinct traces of Egyptian artistic influence (unless, as Mr. H. R. Hall has now come to believe, we are to trace the origin of the spiral as a decorative motive, not to Egypt, but to the Minoans of Crete). At Tiryns, Schliemann began in 1884 another series of excavations which laid bare the whole ground-plan of the citadel palace of that



THE LONG GALLERY, KNOSSOS (*p.* 68)

ancient fortress town with its halls and separate apartments for men and women, and the colossal enclosing wall, in some parts 57 feet thick, with its towers and galleries and chambers constructed in the thickness of the wall (Plate V. 1). The palace revealed evidences of considerable skill in the decorative arts. A beautiful frieze of alabaster carved in rosettes and palmettes, inlaid with blue paste, made plain what Homer meant when he wrote of the Palace of Alcinous: 'Brazen were the walls which ran this way and that from the threshold to the inmost chamber, and round them was a frieze of blue' (*kuanos*); while fresco paintings in several of the rooms exhibited the spiral and rosette decoration of Orchomenos and Egypt. But perhaps the most interesting find was the remains of a great wall-painting in which a mighty bull is represented charging at full speed, while an athlete, clinging to the monster's horn with one hand, vaults over his back—a picture which is the first important example of the now well-known and numerous set of similar representations which have given us a clue to something of the meaning of the old legend of the man-destroying Minotaur and his tribute of human victims.

Schliemann's discoveries, notwithstanding all the incredulity aroused by his sometimes rather headlong enthusiasm, created an extraordinary amount of interest among scholars and students of early European culture. It was felt at once that he had brought the world face to face with facts which

must profoundly modify all opinions hitherto held as to the origins of Greek civilization ; for the advanced and fully ripened art which was disclosed, especially in the wonderful finds from the Shaft- or Circle-Graves, stood on an entirely different plane from any art which had hitherto been associated with the early age of Greece ; and it was evident, not only that the date at which civilization began to reveal itself in Hellas must be pushed back several centuries, but also that the great differences between the mature Mycenæan art and the infant art of Greece required explanation. To the discoverer himself, the supreme interest of his finds always lay in the thought that they were the direct prototypes, if not the actual originals, of the civilization described in the Homeric poems ; but to the question whether this was so or not, a question interesting in itself, but largely academic, there succeeded a much more important one. Here was proof of the existence of a civilization, obviously great and long-enduring, whose products could not be identified with those of any other art known to exist. To what race of men were the achievements of this early culture to be ascribed, and what relation did they hold to the Hellenes of history ?

The work of Schliemann was continued and extended by successors such as Dörpfeld, Tsountas, Mackenzie, and others, and by the end of the nineteenth century it had become apparent that the culture of which the first important traces had been found at Mycenæ had extended to some extent over

all Hellas, but chiefly over the south-eastern portion of the mainland and over the Cyclades. The principal find-spots in Greece proper were in the Argolid and in Attica; but, besides these, abundant material was discovered at Enkomi (Cyprus) and at Phylâkopi (Melos), while from Vaphio, near Amyklæ in Laconia, there came, among other treasures, a pair of most wonderful gold cups, whose workmanship surpassed anything that could have been imagined of such an early period, and is only to be matched by the goldsmith work of the Renaissance. Hissarlik, under Dr. Dörpfeld's hands, yielded from the Sixth City the evidence of an Asiatic civilization truly contemporaneous with that of Mycenæ. Even before the end of the century it became apparent that Crete was destined to prove a focus of this early culture, and the promise, as we shall see later, has been more than fulfilled. In Egypt Professor Petrie found deposits of prehistoric Ægean pottery in the Delta, the Fayum, and even in Middle Egypt, proving that this civilization, whatever its origin, had been in contact with the ancient civilization of the Nile Valley, while even in the Western Mediterranean, in Sicily particularly, in Italy, Sardinia, and Spain, finds, less plentiful, but quite unmistakable, bore witness to the wide diffusion of Mycenæan culture.

Roughly, the result came to this: 'that before the epoch at which we are used to place the beginnings of Greek civilization—that is, the opening centuries of the last millennial period B.C.—we must allow for

an immensely long record of human artistic productivity, going back into the Neolithic Age, and culminating towards the close of the age of Bronze in a culture more fecund and more refined than any we are to find again in the same lands till the age of Iron was far advanced. Man in Hellas was more highly civilized before history than when history begins to record his state; and there existed human society in the Hellenic area, organized and productive, to a period so remote that its origins were more distant from the age of Pericles than that age is from our own. We have probably to deal with a total period of civilization in the Ægean not much shorter than in the Nile Valley.'*

The estimate in Hogarth's last sentence, which was published in 1899, before Evans's great discoveries in Crete, was one that must have seemed extravagant to those who, while familiar with the great antiquity of Mesopotamian and Egyptian culture, had been accustomed to think of Greek civilization as having its beginning not so very long before the First Olympiad. It has been fully justified, however, by the event, and it may now be accepted as an established fact that the earliest civilization of Greece meets the two great ancient civilizations of Babylon and Egypt on substantially equal terms. In antiquity it appears to be practically contemporary with them; in artistic merit it need not shrink from comparison with either of them.

In the earlier stages of the discussion which

* Hogarth, 'Authority and Archæology,' p. 230.

followed on the discoveries, it was assumed, perhaps somewhat hastily, that such a culture could not have been indigenous, resemblances to Egyptian and Mesopotamian work were pointed out, and it was suggested that the impulse and the skill which gave rise to the art of Mycenæ were not native but borrowed, the Phœnicians being generally held to be the medium through which the influence of the East had filtered into the Ægean area. As time has gone on, however, the Phœnicians have gradually come to bulk less and less in the view of students of the Ægean problem. It is no longer held that they contributed anything original to the development of Mycenæan culture, and even as middlemen the tendency is to allow them an influence far smaller than was once held to be theirs. It has become manifest that, in at least the case of Crete and Egypt, communication need not have been through Phœnician media at all, but was far more probably direct. And with regard to the whole question of the debt owed to the East by this early European civilization, it is probable that the Ægean gave quite as much as it borrowed, and that its artists were sufficiently great to have originated their own culture. Mycenæan, and still more the great Minoan art of which Mycenæan has proved to be only a decadent phase, needed no Oriental crutches. With regard to Egypt, the obligations of the two cultures were certainly mutual; each influenced the other; it was not a case of master and scholar, but of two contemporary civilizations, each fully inspired

with a native spirit, each ready to use whatever seemed good to it in the work of the other, but both perfectly original in their genius.

The question which was of such supreme interest to Schliemann still survives, however, though in a wider and more important form than that in which he conceived of it. It is no longer a question of whether the graves which he found were actually those of Agamemnon and his fellow-victims in the dark tragedy of Mycenæ, but of whether the people and the civilization whose remains have been brought to light are, or are not, the people and the civilization from which the Homeric bards drew the whole setting of their poems. Were the Mycenæans the Greeks of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and was it their culture that is depicted for us in these great poems?

The arguments in favour of such a supposition are of considerable strength. For one thing, we have the remarkable coincidence between the geography of the poems and the localities over which the Mycenæan culture is seen to have extended. The towns and lands which occupy the foremost place in the Homeric story are also those in which the most convincing evidences of Mycenæan culture have been discovered. Foremost, of course, we have Mycenæ itself. To Homer, 'golden,' 'broad-wayed' Mycenæ is the seat of the great leader of all the Achæans, the King of men, Agamemnon; it is also the chief seat of the culture which goes by its name. Orchomenos, Pylos, Lacedæmon, Attica, all prominent in the poems, are

also well-known seats of Mycenæan civilization. Crete, whose prominent position in the Homeric world has been already referred to, we shall shortly see to have been in point of fact the supreme centre of that still greater and richer civilization of which the Mycenæan is a later and comparatively degenerate form. There is no need to enter into further detail; but broadly it is the fact that the distribution of Mycenæan remains practically follows, at least to a great extent, the geography of the poems. The world with which the Homeric bards were familiar was, in the main, the world in which the civilization of the Mycenæans prevailed.

The Homeric house also finds a striking parallel in the details of the Mycenæan palaces whose remains have been preserved. Leaving aside all disputed points, the broad fact remains that 'all the structural features described, the courtyard, with its altar to Zeus and trench for sacrifices; the vestibule; the ante-chamber; the hall, with its fireplace and its pillars; the bathroom, with passage from the hall; the upper story, sometimes containing the women's quarters; the spaciousness; the decoration; even the furniture, have been most wonderfully identified at Tiryns and Mycenæ, and in Crete.' In Crete, along with the resemblances above referred to, are found important differences, such as the position of the hearth, and the details of the lighting. These, which are probably due to differences of climate, do not, however, invalidate the fact of the general correspondence.

In details, we have the frieze of *kuanos* of the Palace of Alcinous, paralleled by the fragments discovered, as already mentioned, at Tiryns, and by similar friezes at Knossos, while the bronze walls of the same palace have been, if not paralleled, at all events illustrated, by the bronze decorations of the vaults of the great bee-hive tombs at Mycenæ and Orchomenos. The parallel is, perhaps, even closer when we come to the details of metal-working, which are described for us in Homer, and of which illustrations have been found in such profusion among the Mycenæan relics. We are told, for example, that on the brooch of Odysseus was represented a hound holding a writhing fawn between its forepaws, and we have the elaborate workmanship of the cup of Nestor—'a right goodly cup, that the old man brought from home, embossed with studs of gold, and four handles there were to it, and round each two golden doves were feeding, and to the cup were two bottoms. Another man could scarce have lifted the cup from the table, but Nestor the Old raised it easily.' The Mycenæan finds have yielded examples of metal-working which seem to come as near to the Homeric pictures as it is possible for material things to come to verbal descriptions. One of the golden cups from the Fourth Grave at Mycenæ might almost have been a copy on a small scale of Nestor's cup, save that it had only two handles instead of four. On the handles, as in the Homeric picture, doves are feeding, and like Nestor's, the Mycenæan cup is riveted with gold.

Or, take again such examples of another form of art-work in metal as are given by the scenes of the lion hunt and the hunting-cats on the dagger-blades found in Graves IV. and V. at Mycenæ. In the first of these scenes we have a representation of five men attacking three lions. The foremost man has been thrown down by the assault of the first lion, and is entangled in his great shield. His four companions are coming to his help, one armed with a bow, the others carrying spears and huge shields, two of them of the typical Mycenæan figure-eight shape. Only the first lion awaits their onset, the other two are in full flight. The whole work is characterized by extraordinary vivacity; but it is the technique that is of interest. The picture is made up out of various metals inlaid on a thin bronze plate, which is let into the dagger-blade. The lions and the bare skin of the men are inlaid in gold, the loin-cloths and the shields are of silver, all the accessories, such as shield-straps and the patterns on the loin-cloths, are given in a dark substance, while the ground is coated with a dark enamel to give relief to the figures. The hunting-cat scene, which presents remarkable resemblances to a well-known scene from a wall-painting at Thebes, represents cats hunting wild-fowl in a marsh intersected by a winding river, in which fish are swimming and papyrus plants growing. 'The cats, the plants, and the bodies of the ducks are inlaid with gold, the wings of the ducks and the river are silver, and the fish are given in some dark substance. On the

neck of one of the ducks is a red drop of blood, probably given by alloyed gold.' Here we have the very type of art in which the decorations of the shield of Achilles were carried out. 'Also he set therein a vineyard teaming plenteously with clusters, wrought fair in gold; black were the grapes, but the vines hung throughout on silver poles. And around it he ran a ditch of *kuanos*, and round that a fence of tin. . . . Also he wrought therein a herd of kine with upright horns, and the kine were fashioned of gold and tin.'

Such are some of the points which countenance the idea that in the Mycenæan people we have the originals of the people of the Homeric poems. On the other hand there are difficulties, by no means inconsiderable, in the way of such a belief. Of these the chief is the question of the method in which the bodies of the dead are disposed of. The men of the Homeric poems burned their dead; the men of the Mycenæan civilization buried theirs. Undoubtedly this is a serious difficulty in the way of identification, presupposing, as it does, a different view of the destiny of the soul after death. The men who burned the bodies of their dead believed that the soul had no further use for its body after death, but departed into a distant, shadowy, immaterial region, so that the body, if it had any connection with the soul, acted rather as a drag and a defilement, from which it was well that the soul should be released. Therefore they dematerialized the body, and often the things used by the body

during life, by the action of fire. On the other hand, those who buried their dead believed that the spirit of the dead man dwelt in some fashion in the tomb, or at least hovered around the body, waiting, perhaps, for a reincarnation, and capable of using the weapons, the utensils, and the foods of its former life. Therefore the body was carefully interred, sometimes even embalmed, and its weapons and foods, or at all events simulacra of these, were laid beside it.

The distinction between the two lines of thought is clear and strong; but it does not necessarily presuppose an absolute distinction of race. It is not improbable that towards the end of the Mycenæan period, to which in any case the connection with the Homeric poems would belong, cremation was beginning to supersede the older practice of interment. In late Mycenæan graves at Salamis evidences of cremation are found, and at Mouliana, in Crete, there are instances of uncremated bones being found along with bronze swords on one side of a tomb, while on the other were found an iron sword and cremated bones in a cinerary urn. The distinction, then, is not necessarily one of race, but of custom, gradually changing, perhaps within a comparatively short period. It has even been suggested that no interval of time of any great extent is needed, as the practice of cremation may quickly develop among any race, being prompted by the comfortable idea that when the flesh is disposed of, the possibly inconvenient, possibly even

vampire, ghost of a disagreeable ancestor goes along with it.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that the Homeric poems certainly contemplate a much wider use of iron than can be found among the remains of the Mycenæan people. But the weight of this objection may easily be exaggerated. Certainly the equipment contemplated for the Homeric heroes is in most cases of bronze, though the well-known line from the Odyssey, 'iron does of itself attract a man,' bears witness to a time when iron had become the almost universal fighting metal. But even in some of the Mycenæan tombs iron appears in the shape of finger-rings; and in East Cretan tombs of the latest Minoan period iron swords have been found. And if, as is generally agreed, the Homeric poems represent the work of several bards covering a considerable period of time, there is nothing out of the way in the supposition that, while the earlier writers represented bronze as the material for weapons, because it was actually so in their time, the later ones, writing at a period when iron was largely superseding, but had not altogether superseded, the older metal, should, while clinging in general to the old poetic word used by their predecessors, occasionally introduce the name of the metal which was becoming prevalent in their day. From this point of view the difficulty seems to disappear. The Homeric age proper is one of bronze-using people; but, in the later stages of the development of the poems, iron makes its appearance, just

as it had been gradually doing in the generally bronze-using Mycenæan civilization.

The same remark applies to the differences of equipment between the warriors of the Mycenæan and those of the Homeric period. The Mycenæans used the great hide-shield, either oblong or 8-shaped, covering its bearer from head to foot, with a leather cap for the head, and no defensive armour of metal. In the Iliad, on the other hand, what is obviously contemplated in general is a metal helmet, a metal cuirass, and a comparatively small round shield. But, again, in later Mycenæan work, such as the famous Warrior Vase, there is evidence of the use of the small round shield, while, moreover, in some parts of the poem there are evidences of the use of the true Mycenæan shield 'like a tower.' Periphetes of Mycenæ is slain by Hector owing to his having tripped over the lower edge of his great shield, and his slayer himself bears a shield of no small proportions. 'So saying, Hector of the glancing helm departed, and the black hide beat on either side against his ankles and his neck, even the rim that ran uttermost about his bossed shield.' So that the poems represent a gradual development in the use of armour which may not unfairly be compared with the similar development traceable in the Mycenæan remains.

On the whole, then, our conclusion is something like this: The civilization which Schliemann discovered is not precisely that of the Homeric poems, for the bloom of it belongs to a period considerably

anterior to the period of Achæan supremacy in Greece, and was the work of a race differing from that of the chiefs who fought at Troy; but, broadly speaking, what Homer describes is the same civilization in its latest stage, when the men of Mycenæan or Minoan stock who created it had passed under the dominion of the invading Achæan overlords. The Achæan invasion was not, like that which succeeded it, subversive of the great culture that belonged to the conquered Mycenæan race; on the contrary, the invaders entered into and became partakers of it, carrying on its traditions until the gradual decay, which had begun already before they made their appearance in Greece, was terminated by the Dorian invasion, or whatever process of gradual incursion by ruder tribes may correspond to what the later Greeks called by that name. And it is this last stage of the Mycenæan culture, still existing, though under Achæan supremacy, which is depicted in the Homeric poems. 'Take away from the picture,' says Father Browne, 'all the features which have been borrowed from the Dorian invasion, give the post-Dorian poets the credit of the references to iron and other post-Dorian things, and nothing remains to disprove the view of those who hold that Schliemann found—not, indeed, the tomb of Agamemnon—but the tomb of that Homeric life which Agamemnon represents to us. In the Mycenæan remains we have uncovered before our eyes the material form of that impulse of which we had already met the spiritual in the Homeric page.'*

* H. Browne, 'Homeric Study,' pp. 313, 314.

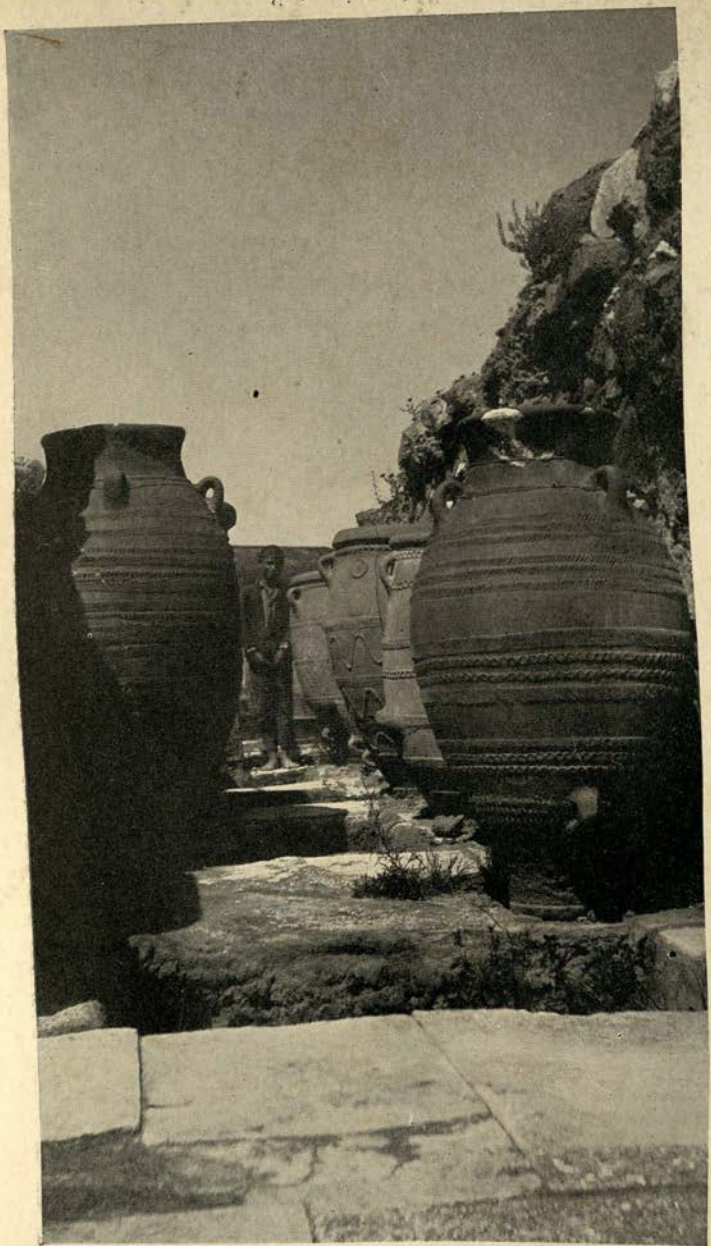
CHAPTER IV

THE PALACE OF 'BROAD KNOSSOS'

In the revival of interest in the origins of Greek civilization it was manifest that Crete could not long be left out of account, for the traditions of Minos and his laws, and of the wonderful works of Dædalus, pointed clearly to the fact that the great island must have been an early seat of learning and art. Most of these traditions clustered round Knossos, the famous capital of Minos, where once stood the Labyrinth, and near to which was Mount Juktas, the traditional burying-place of Zeus. The remains apparent on the site of the ancient capital were by no means imposing. In 1834 Pashley found that 'all the now existing vestiges of the ancient metropolis of Crete are some rude masses of Roman brick-work'; and Spratt in 1851 saw very little more, mentioning only 'some scattered foundations and a few detached masses of masonry of the Roman time,' though in the time of the Venetian occupation there was evidently more to be seen, as Cornaro speaks of 'a very large quantity of ruins, and in particular a wall, many paces long and very thick.'

But expectation still fixed on Knossos as the most probable site for any Cretan discoveries.

The attention of Schliemann and Stillman had been drawn to a hill called 'Kephala,' overlooking the ancient site of Knossos, on which stood ruined walls consisting of great gypsum blocks engraved with curious characters; but attempts at exploration were defeated by the obstacles raised by the native proprietors. In 1878 Minos Kalochærinos made some slight excavations, and found a few great jars or *pithoi*, and some fragments of Mycenæan pottery; but up to the year 1895, when Dr. A. J. Evans secured a quarter of the Kephala site from one of the joint proprietors, nothing of any real moment had been accomplished. Dr. Evans had been attracted to Crete by the purchase at Athens of some seal-stones found in the island, engraved with hieroglyphic and linear signs differing from Egyptian and Hittite characters. In the hope that he might be led to the discovery of a Cretan system of writing, and relying upon the ancient Cretan tradition that the Phœnicians had not invented letters, but had 'merely changed the forms of an already existing system, he began in 1894 a series of explorations in Central and Eastern Crete. On all hands more or less important evidence of the existence of such a script came to light, especially from the Dictæan Cave, where a stone libation-altar was found, inscribed with a dedication in the unknown writing. But Dr. Evans was persuaded that Knossos was the spot where exploration was most likely to be rewarded,



A MAGAZINE WITH JARS AND KASELLES, KNOSSOS (*p.* 69)

and his purchase of part of the site of Kephala in 1895 was the beginning of a series of campaigns which have had results not less romantic than those of Schliemann, and even more important in their additions to our knowledge of the prehistoric Ægean civilization.

The political troubles of the time were unfavourable to exploration. Fighting was going on in the island, and religious prejudices ran very high. When the new political order came into being with the appointment of Prince George of Greece as Commissioner, an obstacle was still found in the way in the shape of a French claim to prior rights of excavation. This, however, was finally withdrawn on the advice of Prince George, and in the beginning of 1900 Dr. Evans was at last able to secure the remainder of the site, and on March 23 in that year excavation began, and was carried on with a staff of from 80 to 150 men until the beginning of June.

Almost at once it became apparent that the faith which had fought so persistently for the attainment of its object was going to be rewarded. The remains of walls began to appear, sometimes only a foot or two, sometimes only a few inches below the surface of the soil, and by the end of the nine weeks' campaign of exploration about two acres of a vast prehistoric building had been unearthed — a palace which, even at this early stage in its disclosure, was already far larger than those of Tiryns and Mycenæ. On the eastern slope of the hill, in a deposit of pale

clay, were found fragments of the black, hand-made, polished pottery, known as 'bucchero,' characteristic of neolithic sites, some of it, as usual, decorated with incised patterns filled in with white. This pottery was coupled with stone celts and maces, obsidian knives, and a primitive female image of incised and inlaid clay. All over the palace area, as the excavations went farther and farther down, the neolithic deposit was found to overlie the virgin soil, sometimes to a depth of 24 feet, showing that the site had been thickly populated in remote prehistoric times.

But the neolithic deposit was not the most striking find. On the south-west side of the site there came to light a spacious paved court, opening before walls faced with huge blocks of gypsum. At the southern corner of this court stood a portico, which afforded access to this portion of the interior of the palace. The portico had a double door, whose lintel had once been supported by a massive central column of wood. The wall flanking the entrance had been decorated with a fresco, part of which represented that favourite subject of Mycenæan and Minoan art—a great bull; while on the walls of the corridor which led away from the portal were still preserved the lower portions of a procession of life-size painted figures. Conspicuous among these was one figure, probably that of a Queen, dressed in magnificent apparel, while there were also remains of the figures of two youths, wearing gold and silver belts and loin-cloths, one of them bearing a fluted marble vase

with a silver base. At the southern angle of the building, this corridor—the 'Corridor of the Procession'—led round to a great southern portico with double columns, and in a passage-way behind this portico there came to light one of the first fairly complete evidences of the outward fashion and appearance of the great prehistoric race which had founded the civilization of Knossos and Mycenæ. This was the fresco-painting, preserved almost perfectly in its upper part, of a youth bearing a gold-mounted silver cup (Plate VI.). His loin-cloth is decorated with a beautiful quatrefoil pattern; he wears a silver ear-ornament, silver rings on the neck and the upper arm, and on the wrist a bracelet with an agate gem.

'The colours,' says Dr. Evans in that brilliant article in the *Monthly Review* which first gave to the general public the story of his first season's discoveries, 'were almost as brilliant as when laid down over three thousand years before. For the first time the true portraiture of a man of this mysterious Mycenæan race rises before us. The flesh-tint, following, perhaps, an Egyptian precedent, is of a deep reddish-brown. The limbs are finely moulded, though the waist, as usual in Mycenæan fashions, is tightly drawn in by a silver-mounted girdle, giving great relief to the hips. The profile of the face is pure and almost classically Greek. . . . The lips are somewhat full, but the physiognomy has certainly no Semitic cast. . . . There was something very impressive in this vision of brilliant youth and of

male beauty, recalled after so long an interval to our upper air from what had been, till yesterday, a forgotten world. Even our untutored Cretan workmen felt the spell and fascination. They, indeed, regarded the discovery of such a painting in the bosom of the earth as nothing less than miraculous, and saw in it the icon of a Saint! The removal of the fresco required a delicate and laborious piece of under-plastering, which necessitated its being watched at night, and old Manolis, one of the most trustworthy of our gang, was told off for the purpose. Somehow or other he fell asleep, but the wrathful saint appeared to him in a dream. Waking with a start, he was conscious of a mysterious presence; the animals round began to low and neigh, and "there were visions about"; "φαντάζει," he said, in summing up his experiences next morning, "the whole place spooks!"'*

The Southern Portico gave access to a large court which turned out, from later investigation, to have been really the Central Court of the palace, the focus of the life of the whole huge building. The block of building between the West and the Central Courts was divided into two by a long gallery (Plate VII.), 3·40 metres in breadth, running almost the whole length of the structure, and paved with gypsum blocks. Between this gallery and the western wall of the palace lay a long range of what had evidently been magazines for the storage of oil, and perhaps of corn. They were occupied by rows

* *Monthly Review*, March, 1901, pp. 124, 125.



MAGAZINE WITH JARS AND KASELLES



GREAT JAR WITH TRICKLE ORNAMENT

of huge earthenware jars, or *pithoi*, sufficiently large to have held the Forty Thieves, or to have accommodated the soldiers of Tahuti in their venture on Joppa (Plates VIII. and IX.). In one of the magazines no fewer than twenty of these jars were found. They were all ornamented, some of them very elaborately, with spiral and rope-work patterns; one of them, found, not in a magazine, but in a small room near the Central Court, was particularly elaborate in its adornment, and stood almost five feet in height (Plate X. 2). Down the centre line of each magazine ran a row of small square openings in the floor—'kaselles,' as they came to be called—which at one time had evidently been receptacles, some of them, perhaps, for oil, but some of them certainly for valuables. They were carefully lined with lead, and in some cases the slabs of stone covering them could not be removed without lifting the whole pavement. In spite of such precautions, however, they had been well rifled in ancient days, and little was left to tell of what their contents may once have been. The magazines were well fitted to convey a strong impression, not only of the size, but also of the splendour of the palace which needed such store-rooms. There was no meanness or squalor about the domestic offices of the House of Minos. The doorways leading into the magazines from the Long Corridor were of fine stone-work, and the side-walls, both of the gallery and the magazines, had been covered with painted plaster, presenting a white ground on which ran a dado of horizontal bands of

red and blue, further bands of the same colours forming a frieze below the ceiling level. This, of course, had been merely the basement of the palace, and had been surmounted by another storey or storeys, of which nothing was left except fragments of the painted plaster which had once decorated the walls.

To the rooms composing the block of building between the Long Gallery and the Central Court, access had been given from the latter area; and it was in these rooms that, as the excavations progressed, some of the most remarkable features of the palace began to disclose themselves. About halfway along the court were found two small rooms, connected with one another, in the centre of each of which stood a single column composed of four gypsum blocks, each block marked with the sign of the Double Axe; and these pillars suggested a connection with ancient traditions about Minos and his works (Plate XI.). They were apparently sacred emblems connected with the worship of a divinity, and the Double Axe markings pointed to the divinity in question. For the special emblem of the Cretan Zeus (and also apparently of the female divinity of whom Zeus was the successor) was the Double Axe, a weapon of which numerous votive specimens in bronze have been found in the cave-sanctuary of Dicte, the fabled birthplace of the god. And the name of the Double Axe is Labrys—a word found also in the title of the Carian Zeus, Zeus of Labraunda. But tradition linked the names of

Minos and Knossos with a great and wonderful structure of Dædalus which went by the name of the Labyrinth; and the coincidence between that name and the Labrys marks on the sacred pillars and on many of the blocks in the palace at once suggested that here was the source of the old tradition, and here the actual building, the Labyrinth, which Dædalus reared for his great master. 'There can be little remaining doubt,' says Dr. Evans, 'that this vast edifice, which in a broad historic sense we are justified in calling the "Palace of Minos," is one and the same as the traditional "Labyrinth." A great part of the ground-plan itself, with its long corridors and repeated successions of blind galleries, its tortuous passages and spacious underground conduit, its bewildering system of small chambers, does, in fact, present many of the characteristics of a maze.'* The connection thus suggested even by the first year's excavations has grown more and more probable with the work of each successive season.

Passing farther north along the line of the Central Court, access was given by a row of four steps to an ante-chamber, which opened upon another room, of no great size in itself, but of surpassing interest from the character of its appointments. 'Already, a few inches below the surface, freshly preserved fresco began to appear. Walls were shortly uncovered, decorated with flowering plants and running water, while on each side of the doorway of a small

* *Monthly Review*, March, 1901, p. 131.

inner room, stood guardian griffins with peacock's plumes in the same flowery landscape. Round the walls ran low stone benches, and between these, on the north side, separated by a small interval, and raised on a stone base, rose a gypsum throne with a high back, and originally covered with decorative designs. Its lower part was adorned with a curiously carved arch, with crocketed mouldings, showing an extraordinary anticipation of some most characteristic features of Gothic architecture. Opposite the throne was a finely wrought tank of gypsum slabs—a feature borrowed perhaps from an Egyptian palace—approached by a descending flight of steps, and originally surmounted by cypress-wood columns, supporting a kind of *impluvium*. Here truly was the 'council chamber of a Mycenæan King or Sovereign Lady.'* The discovery of the very throne of Minos, for such we may fairly term it, was surely the most dramatic and fitting recompense for the explorer's patience and persistence. No more ancient throne exists in Europe, or probably in the world, and none whose associations are anything like so full of interest (Plate I.).

The Throne Room still preserved among its débris many relics of former splendour. Fragments of blue and green porcelain, of gold-foil, and lapis lazuli and crystal, were scattered on the floor, and several crystal plaques with painting on the back, among them an exceedingly fine miniature of a galloping bull on an azure ground; while an agate plaque,

* *Monthly Review*, March, 1901, pp. 123, 124.

bearing a relief of a dagger laid upon a folded belt, almost equalled cameo-work in the style and delicacy of its execution. In a small room on the north side of the Central Court was found a curiously quaint and delicate specimen of early fresco painting—the figure of a Little Boy Blue—more thoroughly deserving of the title than Gainsborough's famous picture, for, strangely enough, he is blue in his flesh-tints, picking and placing in a vase the white crocuses that still dapple the Cretan meadows.

The northern side of the palace was finished with another portico, and in this part of the building there came to light a series of miniature frescoes, valuable, not only as works of art, but as contemporary documents for the appearance, dress, and surroundings of the mysterious people to whom this great building was once home. Here were groups of ladies with the conventional white complexion given by the Minoan artists to their womankind, wonderfully bedizened with costumes resembling far more closely the evening dress of our own day than the stately robes of classic Greece with their severe lines. In their very low-necked dresses, with puffed sleeves, excessively slender waists, and flounced skirts, and their hair elaborately dressed and curled, they were as far as possible removed from our ideas of Ariadne and her maids of honour, and might almost have stepped out of a modern fashion-plate. 'Mais,' exclaimed a French savant, on his first view of them, 'Mais ce sont des Parisiennes.' These fine Court ladies were seated, or perhaps rather

squatted, according to the curious Minoan custom, in groups, conversing in the courts and gardens, and on the balconies of a splendid building. In the spaces beyond were groups of men, of the same reddish-brown complexion as the Cup-bearer, wearing loin-cloths and footgear with puttees halfway up the leg, their long black hair done up into a crest on the crown of the head. In one group alone thirty men appear close to a fortified post; in another, youths are hurling javelins against a besieged city. 'The alternating succession of subjects in these miniature frescoes suggests the contrasted episodes of Achilles' shield. It may be that we have here parts of a continuous historic piece; in any case these unique illustrations of great crowds of men and women within the walls of towns and palaces supply a new and striking commentary on the familiar passage of Homer describing the ancient populousness of the Cretan cities.'* Only the wonderful tomb paintings of ancient Egypt can excel these vivid miniatures in bringing before us the life of a bygone civilization; nothing else to approach them has come down from antiquity.

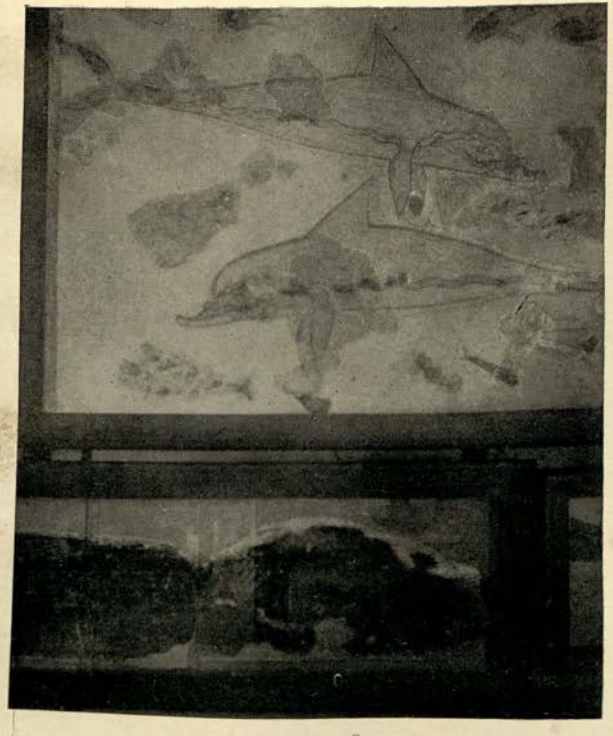
The main entrance of the palace seemingly lay on the north side, where the road from the harbour, three and a half miles distant, ran up to the gates. Here was the one and only trace of fortification discovered in all the excavations. The entrance passage was a stone gangway, on the north-west side of which stood a great bastion, with a guard-

* *Monthly Review*, March, 1901, p. 126.

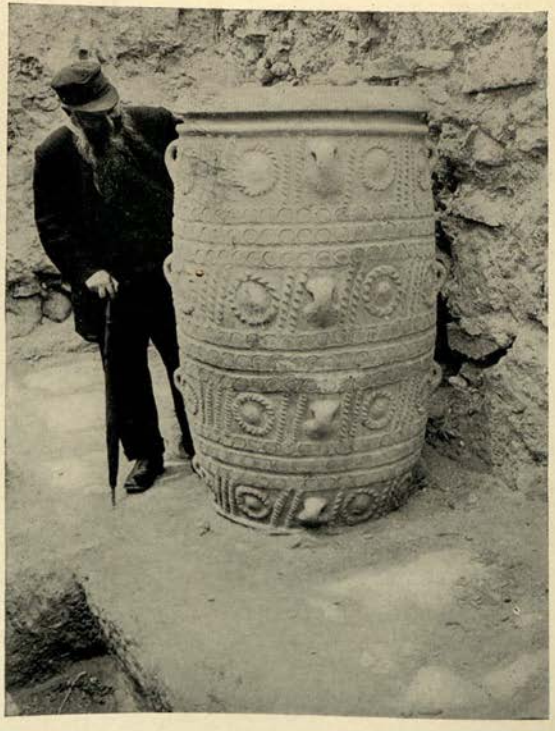
room and sally-port—a slender apology for defence in the case of a prize so vast and tempting as the Palace of Knossos. Obviously the bastion, with its trifling accommodation for an insignificant guard, was never meant to defend the palace against numerous assailants, or a set siege; it could only have been sufficient to protect it against the sudden raid of a handful of pirates sweeping up from the port (Plate XII. 2). How was it that so great and rich a structure came to be left thus practically defenceless? The mainland palaces of the Mycenæan Age at Tiryns and Mycenæ are, so to speak, buried in fortifications. Their vast walls, 57 feet thick in some parts at Tiryns, 46 feet at Mycenæ, towering still after so many centuries of ruin to a height of 24½ feet in the case of the smaller citadel, and of 56 feet at the great stronghold of Agamemnon; their massive gateways, and the ingenious devices by which the assailant was obliged to subject himself in his approach to a destructive fire on his unshielded side—everything about them points to a land and a time in which life and property were continually exposed to the dangers of war, and the only security was to be found within the gates of an impregnable stronghold. But Knossos, far richer, far more splendid, than either Tiryns or Mycenæ, lies virtually unguarded, its spacious courts and pillared porticoes open on every side. Plainly, the Minoan Kings lived in a land where peace was the rule, and where no enemy was expected to break rudely in upon

their luxurious calm. And the reason for their confidence and security is not far to seek, if we remember the statements of Thucydides and Herodotus.

'The first King known to us by tradition as having established a navy is Minos,' says the great Athenian historian. The Minoan Empire, like our own, rested upon sea-power; its great Kings were the Sea-Kings of the ancient world—the first Sea-Kings known to history, over-lords of the Ægean long before the grave Tyrian trader' had learned 'the way of a ship in the sea,' or the land-loving Egyptian had ventured his timid squadrons at the command of a great Queen so far as Punt. And so the fortifications of their capital and palace were not of the huge gypsum blocks which they knew so well how to handle and work. They were the wooden walls, the long low black galleys with the vermilion bows, and the square sail, and the creeping rows of oars, that lay moored or beached at the mouth of the Kairatos River, or cruised around the island coast, keeping the Minoan peace of the Ægean. So long as the war-fleet of Minos was in being, Knossos needed no fortifications. No expedition of any size could force a landing on the island. If the crew of a chance pirate-galley, desperate with hunger, or tempted by reports of the wealth of the great palace, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the Minoan cruisers, and made a swift rush up from the coast, there was the bastion with its armed guard, enough to deal with the handful of men who could be detached for such



PART OF DOLPHIN FRESCO



A GREAT JAR, KNOSSOS

a dare-devil enterprise. But in the fleet of Knossos was her fate; and if once the fleet failed, she had no second line of defence on which to rely against any serious attack. There is every evidence that the fleet did fail at last. The manifest marks of a vast conflagration, perhaps repeated more than once during the long history of the palace, and the significant fact that vessels of metal are next to unknown upon the site, while of gold there is scarcely a trace, with the exception of scattered pieces of gold-foil, appear to indicate either that the Minoan Sovereigns failed to maintain the weapon which had made and guarded their Empire, or that the Minoan sailors met at last with a stronger fleet, or more skilful mariners. Sea-power was lost, and with it everything.

Near the main north entrance of the palace was found one of the great artistic treasures of the season's work. This was a plaster relief of a great bull's head, which had once formed part of a complete figure. These figures of bulls, as we have already seen in connection with the Palace of Tiryns, were among the most favourite subjects of Mycenæan and Minoan art; but nothing so fine as the Knossos relief had yet been discovered. 'It is life-sized, or somewhat over, and modelled in high relief. The eye has an extraordinary prominence, its pupil is yellow, and the iris a bright red, of which narrower bands again appear encircling the white towards the lower circumference of the ball. The horn is of greyish-blue, and both this and the other parts of

the relief are of exceptionally hard plaster, answering to the Italian *gesso duro*. . . . Such as it is, this painted relief is the most magnificent monument of Mycenæan plastic art that has come down to our time. The rendering of the bull, for which the artists of the period showed so great a predilection, is full of life and spirit. It combines in a high degree naturalism with grandeur, and it is no exaggeration to say that no figure of a bull, at once so powerful and so true, was produced by later classical art.'* Plate XIII. shows that this high praise is not undeserved; to match the naturalism of this magnificent Minoan monster one must turn to the Old Kingdom tomb reliefs of Egypt, or to the exquisite Eighteenth Dynasty statue of a cow unearthed in 1906 by Naville from the Temple of Mentuhotop Neb-hapet-Ra, at Deir-el-Bahri.

But the discovery which will doubtless prove in the end to be of greater importance than any other, though as yet the main part of its value is latent, was that of large numbers of clay tablets incised with inscriptions in the unknown script of the Minoans. By the end of March the finding of one tablet near the South Portico gave earnest of future discoveries, and before the season ended over a thousand had been collected from various deposits in the palace. Of these deposits, one contained tablets written in hieroglyphic; but the rest were in the linear script, 'a highly developed form, with regular divisions between the words, and for elegance scarcely sur-

* *Annual of the British School at Athens*, vol. vi., p. 52.

passed by any later form of writing.' The tablets vary in shape and size, some being flat, elongated bars from two to seven and a half inches in length, while others are squarer, ranging up to small octavo. Some of them, along with the linear writing, supply illustrations of the objects to which the inscriptions refer. There are human figures, chariots and horses, cuirasses and axes, houses and barns, and ingots followed by a balance, and accompanied by numerals which probably indicate their value in Minoan talents. It looks as though these were documents referring to the royal arsenals and treasuries. 'Other documents, in which neither ciphers nor pictorial illustrations are to be found, may appeal even more deeply to the imagination. The analogy of the more or less contemporary tablets, written in cuneiform script, found in the Palace of Tell-el-Amarna, might lead us to expect among them the letters from distant governors or diplomatic correspondence. It is probable that some of them are contracts or public acts, which may give some actual formulæ of Minoan legislation. There is, indeed, an atmosphere of legal nicety, worthy of the House of Minos, in the way in which these records were secured. The knots of string which, according to the ancient fashion, stood in the place of locks for the coffers containing the tablets, were rendered inviolable by the attachment of clay seals, impressed with the finely engraved signets, the types of which represented a great variety of subjects, such as ships, chariots, religious scenes, lions, bulls, and other

animals. But—as if this precaution was not in itself considered sufficient—while the clay was still wet the face of the seal was countermarked by a controlling official, and the back countersigned and endorsed by an inscription in the same Mycenæan script as that inscribed on the tablets themselves

The tablets had been stored in coffers of wood, clay, or gypsum. The wooden coffers had perished in the great conflagration which destroyed the palace, and only their charred fragments remained; but the destroying fire had probably contributed to the preservation of the precious writings within, by baking more thoroughly the clay of which they were composed. As yet, in spite of all efforts, it has not proved possible to decipher the inscriptions, for there has so far been no such good fortune as the discovery of a bilingual inscription to do for Minoan what the Rosetta Stone did for Egyptian hieroglyphics. But it is not beyond the bounds of probability that there may yet come to light some treaty between Crete and Egypt which may put the key into the eager searcher's hands, and enable us to read the original records of this long-forgotten kingdom (Plate XIV.).

Even as it is, the discovery of these tablets has altered the whole conception of the relative ages of the various early beginnings of writing in the Eastern Mediterranean area. The Hellenic script is seen to have been in all likelihood no late-born child of the Phœnician, but to have had an ancestor of its own race; and the old Cretan tradition on

* *Monthly Review*, March, 1901, pp. 129, 130.



PILLAR OF THE DOUBLE AXES (*p.* 70)

which Dr. Evans relied at the commencement of his work, has proved to be amply justified. 'In any case,' said Dr. Evans, summing up his first year's results, 'the weighty question, which years before I had set myself to solve on Cretan soil, has found, so far at least, an answer. That great early civilization was not dumb, and the written records of the Hellenic world were carried back some seven centuries beyond the date of the first-known historic writings. But what, perhaps, is even more remarkable than this, is that, when we examine in detail the linear script of these Mycenæan documents, it is impossible not to recognize that we have here a system of writing, syllabic and perhaps partly alphabetic, which stands on a distinctly higher level of development than the hieroglyphs of Egypt, or the cuneiform script of contemporary Syria and Babylonia. It is not till some five centuries later that we find the first dated examples of Phœnician writing.'*

Among the other finds of this wonderful season's work were several stone vases, of masterly workmanship, in marble, alabaster, and steatite, a few vases in pottery of the stirrup type (a type common on other Mycenæan sites, but noticeably rare at Knossos, probably because in the great palace the bulk of such vases were of metal, and were carried off by plunderers in the sack), and a noble head of a lioness, with eyes and nostrils inlaid, which had evidently once formed part of a fountain. One other discovery was most precious,

* *Monthly Review*, March, 1901, p. 130.

not for its own artistic value, which is slight enough, but for the link which it gives with one of the other great sister civilizations of the ancient world. This was the lower part of a small diorite statuette of Egyptian workmanship, with an inscription in hieroglyphic which reads: 'Ab-nub-mes-Sebek-user maat-kheru' (Ab-nub's child, Sebek-user, deceased). The name of the individual and the style of the statuette point to Sebek-user, whoever he may have been, having been an Egyptian of the latter days of the Middle Kingdom, probably about the Thirteenth Dynasty. This is the first link in the chain of evidence, which, as we shall see later, shows the continuous connection between the Minoan and Nilotic civilizations.

Nine weeks after the excavations on the hill of Kephala had begun, the season's work was closed, and, surely, never had a like period of time been more fruitful of fresh knowledge, more illuminative as to the conditions of ancient life, or more destructive of hoary prejudices. It was a new world, new because of its very ancientry, that had begun to rise out of the buried past at the summons of the patient explorer.

CHAPTER V

THE PALACE OF 'BROAD KNOSSOS' (*continued*)

THE discoveries of 1900, important as they were, were evidently far from having exhausted the hidden treasures of the House of Minos; but even the explorer himself, who spoke of his task as being 'barely half completed' by the first year's work, had no conception of the magnitude of the task which yet lay before him, or of the richness of the results which it was destined to produce. The early work in the second year led to a further disclosure of the large area of the Western Court of the palace, which seems to have formed the meeting-place between the citizens of Knossos and their royal masters. Here probably all the business between the town and the palace-folk was transacted; stores were brought up, received and paid for by the palace stewards, and passed into the great magazines; and here, perhaps, the ancients of the Knossian Assembly gathered in council to discuss affairs, as the men of the Greek host gathered in the Iliad, while the King sat in state in the Western Portico, presiding over their de-

liberations. The Portico itself, with its wooden central pillar, 16 feet in height, must have been a sufficiently imposing structure, while the great court on which it opened, more than 160 feet in length, must have formed a stately meeting-place for the citizens. Whether as market-place or open-air council-room, this West Court must have presented a gay and animated spectacle when the prosperity of the Minoan Empire was at its height. Along the outer wall of the palace fronting the court ran a projecting base, which served as a seat where merchants or suppliants might wait, sheltered from the sun by the shadow of the vast building at their backs, till their business fell to be disposed of (Plate XV. 1). Meanwhile they could beguile the time by watching the ever-changing picture in front of them, where gay courtier figures, with gold and jewels on neck and arm, mingled with grave citizens of substance from the town, or gathered round some Egyptian visitor, newly arrived on board one of the Keftiu ships, to discuss some matter of trade—a clean-cut and austere-looking figure, in his garb of pure white linen, beside the more gaudily clothed Minoans. When their eyes wearied of the glare of sunlight on the red cement pavement and the brilliant crowd, they could turn to the wall behind them, where above their heads ran a broad zone of paintings in fresco—shrines with scenes of religion, conventional decorations, and lifelike representations of the great bulls which played so conspicuous, and sometimes so tragic, a part in the Minoan economy.

But the main discoveries of the season were to lie on the opposite side of the building from the Western Court. The Central Court, instead of being, as it had seemed at first, the boundary of the building on the eastern side, was now found to have been the focus of the inner life of the palace. For on its eastern margin, as the excavations progressed, there came to light a mass of building, fully equal in importance to that on the western side, and perhaps of even greater interest. Here the slope of the ground had been such that storey had been piled above storey, even before the level of the Central Court had been reached, so that on this side it was not only the basement of the building that had been preserved, but a whole complex of rooms going down from the central area to different levels, and connected with one another by a great staircase, which, in the course of this and subsequent seasons' excavations, was found to have had no fewer than five flights of steps. Of this staircase, thirty-eight steps are still preserved, and good fortune had so brought it about that at the destruction of the palace some of the upper chambers had fallen in such a manner that their débris actually propped up the staircase and some of the upper floorings, and kept them in place; and thus it has been possible to reconstruct a large part of the arrangement of the various rooms and floors in this quarter of the building (Plate XVI. 1). Far down below the level of the Central Court lay a fine Colonnaded Hall about 26 feet square,

from which the great staircase, with pillars and balustrades, led to the upper quarter (Plate XVII. 2), while adjoining it was a stately and finely-proportioned hall—the Hall of the Double Axes—about 80 feet in length by 26 feet in breadth, and divided transversely by a row of square-sided pillars (Plate XVII. 1). In this part of the building, and especially in the Colonnaded Hall, the conflagration in which the glories of Knossos found their close had been extremely severe, and the evidences of fierce burning were everywhere. In a small room in an upper storey, whose floor was near the present surface of the ground, there came to light also evidence which suggested that the catastrophe of the palace, in whatever form it may have come, came suddenly and unexpectedly. The room had evidently been a sculptor's workshop, and the artist who used it had been employed in the fabrication of those splendid vessels of carved stone in which the Minoan magnates delighted. One of them still stood in the room, finished and ready for transport. It was carved from a veined limestone approaching to marble in texture, and was of noble proportions, standing $27\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height, while its girth was 6 feet $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and its weight such that it took eleven men to carry it from the room where it had waited so long for its resurrection. Its workmanship was superb. The upper rim was decorated with a spiral band, while round the bulging shoulder ran another spiral, whose central coils rose up in bold relief into forms like the shell of a snail, and

its three handles bore another spiral design. But beside it stood another amphora, smaller than its neighbour, and giving unmistakable proof that the artist's work had been suddenly interrupted, for it had only been roughed out, and its decoration had not been begun. The skilful hand that should have finished it had perhaps to grasp sword or spear in the last vain attempt to repel the assault of the invader, and we can only wonder over his half-done work, and imagine what untoward fate befell the worker, and for what unknown master, if he survived the sack, he may have exercised the skill that once gratified the refined taste of his Minoan lord.

Not far from the sculptor's workshop, and in the same quarter of the palace, was found a splendid and convincing proof of the magnificence of the appointments of the House of Minos in its palmy days. This was a board which had evidently been designed for use in some game, perhaps resembling draughts or chess, in which men were moved to and fro from opposite ends. The board was over a yard in length, and rather more than half a yard in breadth. Its framework was of ivory, which had originally been overlaid with thin gold plate, and it was covered with a mosaic of strips and discs of rock-crystal, which in their turn had been backed alternately with silver and blue enamel paste. Round its margin ran a border of marguerites whose central bosses were convex discs of rock-crystal which had probably been set originally in a blue paste background. At the top of the board

were four beautiful reliefs representing nautilus shells, set round with crystal plaques, and bossed with crystal. Below them came four large medallions, set among crystal bars backed with silver plate, and then eleven bars of ribbed crystal and ivory, alternating with one another. Eight shorter bars of crystal backed with blue enamel fill spaces on either side of the topmost section in the lower part of the board, which consists of a two-winged compartment with ten circular openings, the medallions of which have been broken out, but were probably of crystal backed with silver. The remaining space of the board was filled with flat bars of gold-plated ivory alternating with bars of crystal on the blue enamel setting. The mere summary of its decoration conveys no idea of the splendour of a piece of work which, as Professor Burrows says, 'defies description, with its blaze of gold and silver, ivory and crystal.' The Late Minoan monarch who used it—for so gorgeous a piece of workmanship can scarcely have been designed for anyone but a King—must have been as splendid in his amusements as in all the other appointments of his royalty (Plate XVIII.).

The gaming-board suggested the lighter and more innocent side of the palace life. A darker and more tragic aspect of it was hinted at by the fresco which was found in the following season among débris fallen from a chamber overlooking the so-called Court of the Olive Spout. This was a picture of those sports of the arena in which the

Minoan and Mycenæan monarchs evidently took such delight, and in which the main figures were great bulls and toreadors. In this case the picture is one of three toreadors, two girls and a boy, with a single bull. The girls are distinguished by their white skins, their more vari-coloured costumes, their blue and red diadems, and their curlier hair, but are otherwise dressed like their male companion. In the centre of the picture the great bull is seen in full charge. The boy toreador has succeeded in catching the monster's horns and turning a clean somersault over his back, while one of the girls holds out her hands to catch his as he comes to the ground. But the other girl, standing in front of the bull, is just at the critical moment of the cruel sport. The great horns are almost passing under her arms, and it looks almost an even chance whether she will be able to catch them and vault, as her companion has done, over the bull's back, or whether she will fail and be gored to death. With such a sport, in which life or death depended upon an instant, in which a slip of the foot, a mis-judgment of distance, or a wavering of hand or eye meant horrible destruction, we may be sure that the tragedies of the Minoan bull-ring were many and terrible, and that the fair dames of the Knossian Palace, modern in costume and appearance as they seem to us, were as habituated to scenes of cruel bloodshed as any Roman lady who watched the sports of the Colosseum, and saw gladiators hack one another to pieces for her pleasure.

That the sport of the bull-ring, and particularly this exciting and dangerous game of bull-grappling, or *ταυροκαθάψια*, was an established and habitual form of Minoan sport is proved by the multitude of representations of it which have survived. The charging bull of Tiryns, the first to be discovered, was a mystery so long as it stood alone; but it is only one of a succession of such pictures—painted upon walls, engraved upon gems, and stamped on seal impressions—which show that the Cretans and Mycenæans were as fond of their bull-fights as a modern Spaniard of his.

Where did they get the toreadors, male and female, whose lives were to be devoted to such a terrible sport—a sport practically bound to end fatally sooner or later? We may be fairly sure, at all events, that bull-grappling was not taken up voluntarily even by the male, and still less by the female, toreadors; and one of the discoveries made in the excavations of 1901, and followed up later, gave its own suggestion of an explanation. Not very far from the North Entrance of the palace, beneath the room where, the year before, had been found the fresco of the Little Boy Blue gathering crocuses—an innocent figure to cover so grim a revelation—there came to light the walls of two deep pits, going right down, nearly 25 feet, to the virgin soil. The pits were lined with stone-work faced with smooth cement, and it seems most probable that these were the dungeons of the palace, in which we may imagine that the miserable captives

brought back by the great King's fleet from its voyages of conquest and plunder, and the human tribute paid by the conquered states, dragged out their existence until the time came for them either to be trained for the cruel sport to which they were devoted, or actually to take their places in the bull-ring. If it be so, then the dungeons of Minos would keep their captives securely enough; escape from the deep pits, with their smooth and slippery walls, must have been practically impossible, save by connivance on the part of the guards, or by the intervention of some tender-hearted Ariadne.

If those dark walls could only reveal the story of the doomed lives which they once imprisoned, we should probably be able to realize, even more fully than we do, the shadowed side of all the glittering splendour of Knossos, and the grim element of barbaric cruelty which mingled with a refined artistic taste and a delight in all forms of beauty. In none of these great civilizations of the ancient world were splendour and cruelty separated by any great interval from one another, nor was a very remarkable degree of refinement inconsistent with a carelessness of life, and even such a thirst for blood, as we would consider more natural in a savage state; but it is seldom that the evidences of the two things lie so close to one another as where at Knossos the innocent figure of the crocus-gatherer almost covers the very mouth of the horrible pit in which the captives of Minos waited for the day when their lives were to be staked on the hazard of the arena.

Among the other treasures recovered by this season's work was a quantity of fine painted pottery which had fallen from the upper rooms into the basement when the palace floors collapsed. Some of the fragments were of that early polychrome style known as 'Kamares ware,' from the cave on the southern slope of Mount Ida, where it was first discovered by Mr. J. L. Myres. Its designs are purely conventional and largely geometric—zigzags, crosses, spirals, and concentric semicircles—and are executed in beautiful tints of brown, red, yellow, black, and white, the design being sometimes in dark on a light ground, and sometimes in light upon dark. The extraordinary thinness of the walls of these polychrome vessels, and the fineness of the clay from which they are fabricated, show to what a pitch the potter's craft had reached at the early period to which they belong. Of the later pottery of Knossos, which substituted naturalistic motives, executed in monochrome, for the conventional polychrome designs of the Kamares period, many specimens were also found during the excavations of this season.

The frescoes of the previous year were supplemented by the discovery of a number of others, representing zones of human figures, about one-third of life-size, set out on blue and yellow fields with triple borders of black, red, and white bands. One well-preserved figure is that of a girl with very large eyes, lips of brilliant red, and curling black hair. Her high-bodied dress is looped up at the

shoulder with a bunch of blue, with red and black stripes, and fringed ends. A border of the same robe, adorned with smaller loops, crosses the bosom, and between its blue and red bands the white tint of the skin displays itself, showing that the material of the robe was diaphanous. Relief work in stucco was represented by fragments of a life-sized figure, since pieced together by M. Gilliéron, which must have been that of some Minoan King. The head wears a fleur-de-lys crown and peacock plumes, and round the neck of the finely modelled torso there runs a collar of fleur-de-lys ornament.

Again the connection of Knossos with Egypt was evidenced, and this time in most interesting fashion. Near the wall of a bathroom which was unearthed by the north-west side of the North Portico, there was found the lid of an Egyptian alabastron, bearing the cartouche of a King, which reads, 'Neter nefer S'user-en-Ra, sa Ra Khyan.' These are the names of one of the most famous Kings of the enigmatical Hyksos race—Khyan—'the Embracer of the Lands,' as he called himself, one of whose memorials, in the shape of a lion figure, carved in granite, and bearing his cartouche upon its breast, was found as far east as Baghdad, and is now in the British Museum. The statuette of Sebek-user, son of Ab-nub, evidenced a connection between Knossos and Egypt in the time of the later Middle Kingdom. This cartouche of Khyan shows that the connection was maintained in that dark period of Egyptian history which lay between

the fall of the Middle Kingdom and the rise of the Empire. The intercourse between Crete and Egypt, however, goes much farther back than either the domination of the Hyksos or the Middle Kingdom. The discovery of various stone vessels in translucent diorite, and other hard materials familiar to the student of Early Egyptian work as characteristic of the taste of the earliest dynasties, shows that for the beginning of the connection between the two great Empires we must go back to the early days of the Old Kingdom in Egypt. The two civilizations, as we shall see later, can be equated period by period from the earliest times until the catastrophe of Knossos.

Among the seal impressions in clay, which were found in considerable numbers this season, were two worthy of attention: the one of great importance, the other scarcely of importance, but at least of interest. The first was an impression of the figure of a female divinity, dressed in the usual flounced garb of the Mycenæan period, standing upon a sacred rock on which two guardian lions rest their forefeet, the arrangement of the design being very much the same as that of the relief on the Lion Gate at Mycenæ, only with the figure of the goddess taking the place of the sacred pillar. In her hands the goddess holds something which may be either a weapon or a sceptre, and before her stands a male votary in an attitude of adoration. In the background is a shrine with sacred columns, in front of which rise the 'horns of consecration,' which were

characteristic of Minoan temples, as apparently also of other Eastern religious structures. The second discovery was a clay matrix, formed from the impression of an actual seal, and evidently designed for the purpose of providing counterfeit impressions. In fact, we have here an evidence, brought to light after three millenniums, of some very ancient attempt at forgery in the very palace of the great law-giver.

The main result of the season of 1902 was the practical reconstruction of a large part of the Eastern or Domestic Quarter of the palace. The chief room in this part of the building was the Queen's Megaron, an inner chamber divided transversely by a row of pillars, along whose bases ran a raised seat, where, no doubt, the maids of honour of the Minoan Court were wont to sit and gossip. The pillared portico opened upon another elongated area, a characteristic feature of Minoan architecture, which served the purpose of a light-shaft, illuminating the inner room. The light-well had been covered with a brilliant white plaster, on which were the remains of a bird fresco—a long, curving wing, with feathers of red, blue, yellow, white, and black. Adjacent to the Queen's Megaron was a small bathroom, constructed for a portable bath—a fragment of which, in painted terra-cotta, was found in the portico of the adjoining hall.

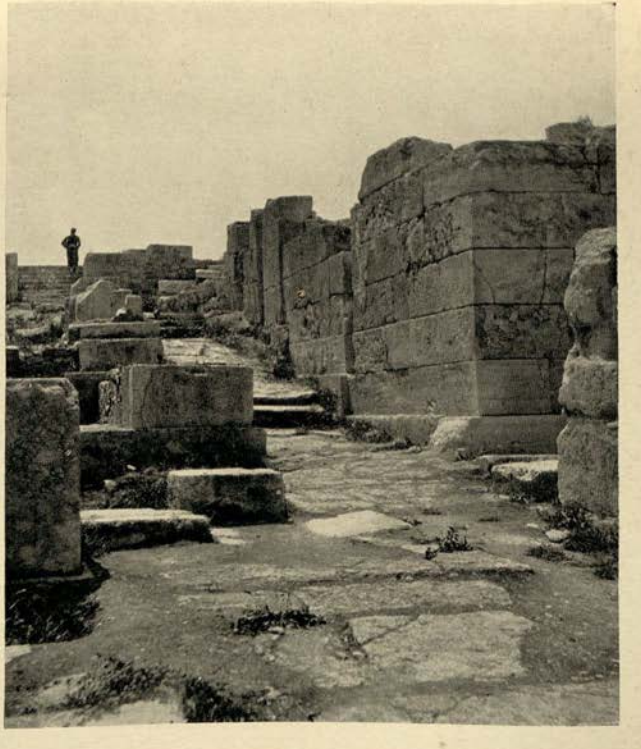
The fresco of the bull-fight, already referred to, was paralleled in subject, and more than matched in artistic quality, by the discovery, in a small secluded room which had apparently served as a

treasury, of a deposit of ivory figurines of the most exquisite workmanship. The height of the best preserved specimen is about 11½ inches, and it is hard to say whether the boldness of the design or the precision with which the details of the tiny figure are wrought out is the more admirable. The attitude is that of a man flinging himself forth in the abandon of a violent leap, with legs and arms extended. His straining muscles are indicated with perfect faithfulness, and even the veins in the diminutive hand and the nails of the tiny fingers are clearly marked. The hair had been formed by curling strands of thin gold wire inserted in the skull. There can be no doubt that these figures formed part of a scene like that of the toreador fresco, for the violent motion suggested is consistent with nothing but some desperate feat of agility like bull-grappling. Probably the leaping figures were suspended by thin gold wires over the backs of ivory bulls, and thus presented a realistic miniature reproduction of the Minoan bull-ring. The extraordinary multiplication of such scenes, in painting, in the round, on gems and seal impressions, helps one to realize the hold which the passion of bull-fighting, or, rather, bull-grappling, had upon the Cretan mind, a hold no doubt connected with the important part which the bull appears to have played in the Minoan religion (Plate XIX.).

One of the season's finds was peculiarly useful and interesting, as having yielded a considerable mass of material for reconstructing the appearance



MINOAN PAVED ROAD (*p.* 110)



NORTH ENTRANCE, KNOSSOS (*p.* 75)

of a Minoan town. A great chest of cypress wood —in which perhaps some Knossian Nausicaa once kept her store of linen—had been decorated with a series of enamelled plaques, depicting a Minoan town, with its towers and houses, its fields and cattle and orchards. The chest itself had perished in the conflagration of the palace, leaving only a charred mass of woodwork; but the plaques survived. Some of them represent houses, evidently of wood and plaster fabric, for the round ends of the beams show in the frontage. On the ground-floor are the doors, in some cases double; above are second and third storyes, with rows of windows fitted with some red material, which may have been oiled and tinted parchment, while some of the houses have an attic storey with windows above the third floor. It is evident that the houses of the Minoan burghers were not the closely-packed mud hovels, separated from one another only by narrow alleys, which characterize the plan of the Egyptian town discovered by Petrie at Illahun, but were substantial structures, giving accommodation which, even to modern ideas, would seem respectable. Of course, one must suppose that the poorer quarters of the town would scarcely be represented on a fabric designed for use in the palace; but the actual remains of a Minoan town, unearthed at Gournia by Mrs. H. B. Hawes, show that that town, at least, was largely composed of houses which must have pretty closely resembled those on the porcelain plaques of Knossos.

Most surprising of all, however, in many respects,

was the revelation of the amazingly complete system of drainage with which the palace was provided. The gradient of the hill which underlay the domestic quarter of the building enabled the architect to arrange for a drainage system on a scale of completeness which is not only unparalleled in ancient times, but which it would be hard to match in Europe until a period as late as the middle of the nineteenth century of our era. A number of stone shafts, descending from the upper floors, lead to a well-built stone conduit, measuring 1 metre by ½ metre, whose inner surface is lined with smooth cement. These shafts were for the purpose of leading into this main conduit the surface-water from the roofs of the palace buildings, and thus securing a periodical flushing of the drains. In connection with this surface-water system, there was elaborated a system of latrines and other contrivances of a sanitary nature, which are 'staggeringly modern' in their appointments.

In the north-eastern quarter, under the Corridor of the Game-Board, are still preserved some of the terra-cotta pipes which served as connections to the main drain. They are actually faucet-jointed pipes of quite modern type, each section 2½ feet in length and 6 inches in diameter at the wide end, and narrowing to 4 inches at the smaller end. 'Jamming was carefully prevented by a stop-ridge that ran round the outside of each narrow end a few inches from the mouth, while the inside of the butt, or broader end, was provided with a raised collar that enabled it to

bear the pressure of the next pipe's stop-ridge, and gave an extra hold for the cement that bound the two pipes together'* (Plate XX. 2).

Indeed, the hydraulic science of the Minoan architects is altogether wonderful in the completeness with which it provided for even the smallest details. On a staircase near the east bastion, on the lower part of the slope, a stone runnel for carrying off the surface water follows the line of the steps. Lest the steepness of the gradient should allow the water to descend too rapidly and flood the pavement below, the runnel is so constructed that the water follows a series of parabolic curves, and the rapidity of its fall is thus checked by friction. The main drains are duly provided with manholes for inspection, and 'are so roomy,' says Dr. Evans, 'that two of my Cretan workmen spent days within them clearing out the accumulated earth and rubble without physical inconvenience.' Those who remember the many extant descriptions of the sanitary arrangements, or rather the want of sanitary arrangements, in such a town as the Edinburgh of the end of the eighteenth century, will best appreciate the care and forethought with which the Minoan architects, more than 3,000 years earlier, had provided for the sanitation of the great Palace of Minos (Plates XVI. 2 and XX. 1).

Turning from the material to the spiritual, evidence as to the religious conceptions of the inhabitants of the palace was forthcoming in two instances. In one early chamber there was found a little painted

* R. M. Burrows, 'The Discoveries in Crete,' p. 9.

terra-cotta object consisting of a group of three columns standing on an oblong platform. The square capitals of the columns each carried two round beams, their ends showing, exactly as in the case of the pillar on the Lion Gate at Mycenæ; and on the top of the beams doves were perched. Here is the evidence of a cult in which a Dove Goddess —a Goddess of the Air—was worshipped under the form of a trinity of pillars; and confirmation of the existence of such a form of belief was afforded by the discovery, in the south-east corner of the palace, of a little shrine, in which, along with the usual 'horns of consecration' and sacred Double Axes, were found three figures of a goddess, of very archaic form, on the head of one of which there was also perched a dove. The Double Axes in the shrine again emphasized the importance in the palace worship of the Labrys, and underlined the suggestion that the Palace of Knossos is nothing more nor less than the legendary Labyrinth of Minos. 'That the *Labrys* symbol should be the distinguishing cult sign of the Minoan Palace makes it more and more probable that we must in fact recognize in this vast building, with its maze of corridors and chambers and its network of subterranean ducts, the local habitation and name of the traditional Labyrinth.'*

The season of 1903 was marked by two important discoveries within the palace area. Of these we may first consider the so-called Theatral Area.

* A. J. Evans, *Annual of the British School at Athens*, vol. viii., p. 103.



RELIEF OF BULL'S HEAD (*p.* 77)

From 'The Palace of Minos,' by Arthur J. Evans, in *The Monthly Review*

(Plates XXI. and XXII.). Such an area had been found at Phæstos by the Italian explorers, and it was natural to expect that something corresponding to it would not be lacking at Knossos. When found, it proved to be of later date and of more developed form than the structure at Phæstos; but the general idea was the same. At the extreme north-west angle of the palace, abutting on the West Court, there was discovered a paved area about 40 by 30 feet, divided up the centre by a causeway. On its eastern and southern sides it was overlooked by two tiers of steps, the eastern tier having at one time consisted of eighteen rows, while the greatest number on the south side was six, diminishing to three as the ground sloped upwards. At the south-eastern angle, where the two tiers met, a bastion of solid masonry projected between them.

This area, for whatever purpose it may have been designed, was evidently an integral portion of the Later Palace structure, for no fewer than five causeways converge upon it from different directions; but it was in no sense a thoroughfare, and the rows of steps around it do not lead, and can never have led, anywhere. What can have been the purpose of its existence? Dr. Evans's view, which is generally accepted, is that it was some sort of a primitive theatre, where the inhabitants of the palace gathered to witness sports and shows of some kind, the tiers of steps affording sitting accommodation for them, while the bastion at the south-east angle may have been a kind of Royal Box, from which Minoan

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majesty and its Court circle surveyed the games. There would be accommodation on the steps for some four or five hundred spectators.

It must be confessed that the place leaves much to be desired as a theatre. The shallow steps must have made somewhat uncomfortable sitting-places, though one must remember that the Minoan ladies often, apparently, adopted a sitting posture which was more like squatting than sitting, and that a seat found in 1901, evidently designed for a woman's use, was only a trifle over 5 inches in height. But male dignity required more lofty sitting accommodation; the seat of the throne of Minos is nearly 23 inches high, and the spectators of the Knossian theatre cannot have been all women. Neither does the shape of the area appear to be particularly well adapted to the purpose suggested; and, on the whole, if it were really designed for a theatre, we must admit that the Minoan architects were less happily inspired in its erection than in most of their other works. At the same time, however, the obstinate fact remains that we can suggest no other conceivable purpose which the place can have served; and so, until some more likely use can be suggested, we are scarcely entitled to demur to Dr. Evans's theory.

Admitting, then, for want of any better explanation, that it may have been a Theatral Area, what were the games or shows which were here presented to the Minoan Court and its dependents? Certainly not the bull-fight. For that there is manifestly no space, as the flat area is not larger than a good-sized

room; while the undefended position of the spectators would as certainly have resulted in tragedies to them as to the toreadors. But from the great rhyton found at Hagia Triada, from a steatite relief found at Knossos in 1901, and from various seal-impressions, we know that boxing was one of the favourite sports of the Minoans, as it was of the Homeric and the classical Greeks; and the Theatral Area may have served well enough for such exhibitions as those in which Epeus knocked out Euryalus, and Odysseus smashed the jaw of Irus. Or perhaps it may have been the scene of less brutal entertainments in the shape of dances, such as those which delighted the eyes of Odysseus at the Palace of Alcinous. To this day the Cretans are fond of dancing, and in ancient times the dance had often a religious significance, and was part of the ceremonial of worship. So that it is not impossible that we have here a spot whose associations with the House of Minos are both religious and literary—'the Choros (or dancing-ground) which Dædalus wrought in broad Knossos for fair-haired Ariadne (Iliad XVIII., 590).

If the Theatral Area be really the scene of the palace sports, it has for us a romantic as well as an historical interest; for Plutarch tells us that it was at the games that Ariadne first met Theseus, and fell in love with him on witnessing his grace and prowess in the wrestling ring. It may be permissible to indulge the imagination with the thought that we can still behold the very place where, while the

grim King and his gaily-bedecked courtiers looked on at the sports which were meant only as a prelude to a dreadful tragedy, the actors in one of the great romances of the world found love waiting for them before the gates of death. In any case, the spot may well have been a most fitting one for the birth of an immortal tale of love. For it is not improbable that, in its religious aspect, it had a connection with a greater, a Divine namesake of the human Ariadne. The great goddess of Knossos, in one aspect of her nature, was the same whom the Greeks knew later as Aphrodite, the foam-born Goddess of Love. To this goddess there was attached in Crete the native dialect epithet of 'The Exceeding Holy One,' 'Ariadne,' and the Theatral Area may well have been the place where ceremonial dances were performed in her honour.

Within the palace walls abundant remains of fine polychrome ware of the Middle Minoan period were found as the season's work went on. The dungeons of the preceding year's excavations were supplemented by the discovery of four more, making six in all, and it was shown that these pits must have belonged to a very early period in the history of the buildings, for they have no structural connection with the walls of the Later Palace, which, indeed, cross them in some places. But the great discovery within the area was that of the Temple Repositories. As the eastern side of the palace gave evidence of having been the domestic quarter, so the west-central part showed traces of having had a special

religious significance in the palace life. Religion, indeed, seems to have bulked very largely in the economy of the House of Minos, which is what might have been expected when one remembers the closeness of the relations between Zeus and Minos as depicted in the legends, and realizes that very probably the Kings of Knossos were Priest-Kings, and perhaps even incarnations of the Bull-god.

Near the west-central part of the palace the Double Axe sign occurred very frequently, and other evidences seemed to suggest that somewhere in this vicinity there must have been a sanctuary of some sort. This season's explorations confirmed the suggestion, for, near the Pillar Room at the west side of the Central Court, there were discovered two large cists, which had been used for the storage of objects connected with the palace cult. The cist which was first opened was closely packed, to a depth of 1·10 metres, with vases; and below these there was a deposit of fragments and complete examples of faïence, including the figures of a Snake Goddess and her votaresses, votive robes and girdles, cups and vases with painted designs, and reliefs of cows and calves, wild goats and kids. In fact, this Repository was a perfect treasure-house of objects in faïence; but in the second cist such objects were wanting, with the exception that a missing portion of the Snake Goddess was found, the place of the faïence being taken by gold-foil and crystal plaques.

Some of the small faïence reliefs are of particularly

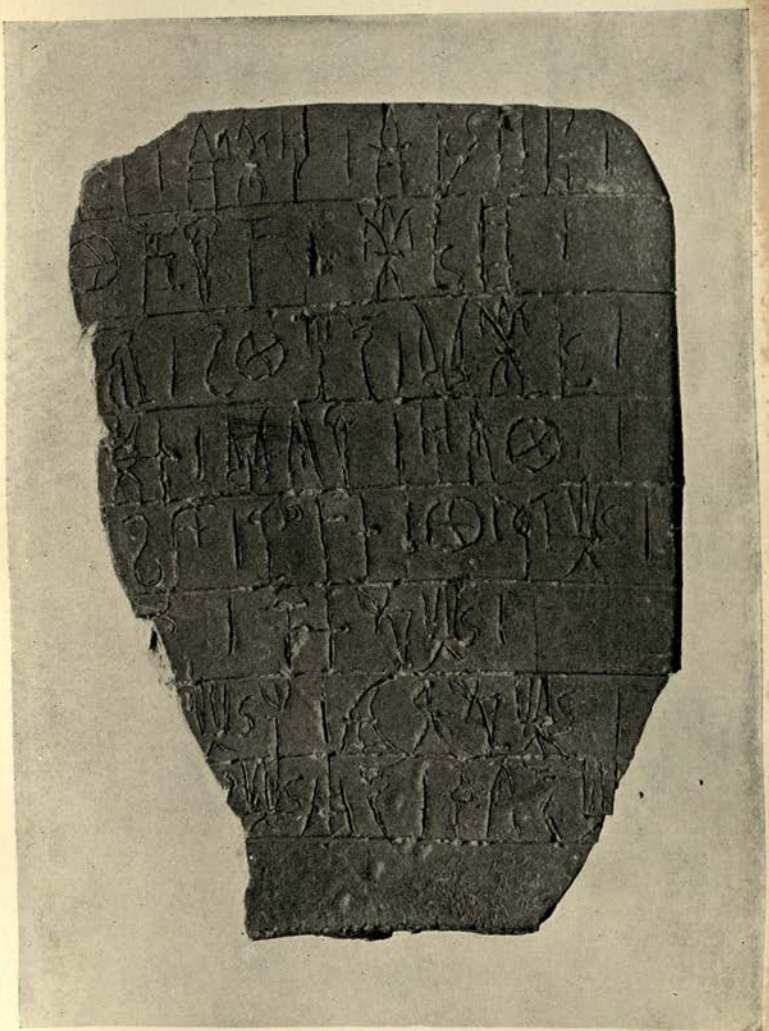
exquisite design and execution, particularly one of a Cretan wild-goat and her young, the subject being executed in pale green, with dark sepia markings, and characterized by great directness and naturalism of treatment. Most interesting, however, were the figures of the Snake Goddess and her votaresses. The goddess is 13½ inches in height. She wears a high tiara of purplish-brown, with a white border, and her dress consists of a richly embroidered jacket, with laced bodice, and a skirt with a short double *panier* or apron. Her hair is dressed in a fringe above her forehead, and falls behind on her neck and shoulders; the eyes and eyebrows are black, and the ears are of extraordinary size; the bust is almost entirely bare. But the curious feature of the little figure is that around her are coiled three snakes. One, which is grasped in the right hand, passes up the arm, descends behind the shoulders and down the left arm to the hand, which holds the tail. Two other snakes are interlaced around her hips, and a fourth coils itself around the high tiara. The figure of the votaress is somewhat similar; but her skirt is flounced all the way down in the regular Minoan style, and she holds a snake in her right hand. The characteristic feature of both figures is the modernness of their lines, which are as different as possible from those of the statues of classic Greece. The waist is exceedingly slender, and altogether 'the lines adopted are those considered ideal by the modern corset-maker rather than those of the sculptor.'

There can be little doubt that these tiny figures point to the worship of an earth goddess, whose emblem is the snake—the other aspect of the heavenly divinity whose symbols are the doves. It may be noted that at Gournia Miss Boyd (Mrs. Hawes) found a primitive figure of a goddess, twined with snakes and accompanied by doves, together with a low, three-legged altar, and the familiar horns of consecration. Strangely enough, along with the Snake Goddess of Knossos there was found in the Temple Repositories a cross of veined marble, with limbs of equal length, which Dr. Evans believes to have actually been the central object of worship in the cult, and which he has placed in this position in his reconstruction of the little shrine. This discovery, 'pointing to the fact that a cross of orthodox Greek shape was not only a religious symbol of the Minoan cult, but an actual object of worship, cannot but have a profound interest in its relation to the later cult of the same emblem which still holds the Christian world.' The fact of the equal-limbed cross having at so early a date been the object of worship also suggests the reason why the Eastern Church has always preferred the Greek form of cross to the unequal-limbed form of the Western Church.

Outside the area of the palace proper discoveries of almost equal importance were made. About 130 yards to the east of the Northern Entrance there came to light the walls of a building which Dr. Evans has designated the Royal Villa. It proved

to be by far the finest example yet discovered of Minoan domestic architecture on a moderate scale, and contained a finely preserved double staircase; while among the relics found within its walls were some very beautiful examples of the ceramic art, including a fine 'stirrup' or 'false-necked' vase of the Later Palace style, decorated in lustrous orange-brown on a paler lustred ground. Still more beautiful was a tall painted jar, nearly 4 feet in height, bearing an exquisite papyrus design in relief (Plate XXIII.).

The main feature of the Villa was a long pillared hall, measuring about 37 by 15 feet. At the one end of it was a raised daïs, separated by a balustrade from the rest of the hall, and approached by an opening in the balustrade with three steps. Immediately in face of the opening a square niche breaks the wall behind the daïs, and here stand the broken fragments of a gypsum throne. A fine stone lamp of lilac gypsum stands on the second step of the daïs (Plate XXIV.). The two rows of pillars which run down the hall divide it into a nave and side aisles, and the hall presents all the elements of a primitive basilica, with its throne for the presiding Bishop or Priest-King. It is possible that we have here the first suggestion of that style of architecture which, passing through the stage where the King-Archon of Athens sat in the 'Stoa Basilike' to try cases of impiety, found its full development at last in the Roman Basilica, the earliest type of Christian church. 'Is the Priest-King of Knossos, who here



CLAY TABLET WITH LINEAR SCRIPT, KNOSSOS (*pp.* 80 & 241)

From 'The Palace of Minos,' by Arthur J. Evans, in *The Monthly Review*

gave his decisions,' says Professor Burrows, 'a direct ancestor of Prætor and Bishop, seated in the Apse within the Chancel, speaking to the people that stood below in Nave and Aisles?'*

So far in the explorations at Knossos metal-work had been conspicuous by its absence. That the Minoans were skilled metal-workers was obvious, for many of their ceramic triumphs presented manifest indications of having been adaptations of metal forms; and the gold cups of Vaphio, which, there can be little doubt, came originally from Crete, bore witness to a skill which would not have disgraced the best Renaissance goldsmiths. But the men, whoever they may have been, who plundered the palace at the time of its great catastrophe, had done their work thoroughly, and left behind them little trace either of the precious metals or of bronze. It turned out, however, that in a block of building which stands between the West Court and the paved area to the north-west of the palace, a strange chance had preserved enough to testify to the art of the bronze-workers of Knossos. One of the floors of this building had sunk in the conflagration before the plunderers had had time to explore the room beneath, and under its débris were found five magnificent bronze vessels—four large basins and a single-handled ewer. The largest basin, 39 centimetres in diameter, is exquisitely wrought with a foliated margin and handle, while another has a lovely design of conventionalized lilies on its border.

* 'The Discoveries in Crete,' pp. 10, 11.

Mention has already been made of the paved causeway which bisects the Theatral Area of the palace. This was found, in 1904, to have a continuation in the shape of a well-made road leading in a north-westerly direction towards the hill-side (Plate XII. 1). It was overlaid by a Roman roadway, and an interesting comparison was thus made possible between the Minoan work and that of the great road-makers of later days. The Roman road came out rather badly from the comparison, the earlier construction being superior in every respect. The central part of the Minoan road consisted of a well-paved causeway, rather more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, while on either side of this there extended to a breadth of more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet a strip of pebbles, clay, and pounded potsherds rammed hard, making the whole breadth of the road almost 12 feet. Close by this first European example of scientific road-making ran the remains of water conduits, which may have led from a spring on Mount Juktas, and near the road also were found magazines of clay tablets, giving details of numbers of chariots, bows, and arrows, while in the immediate neighbourhood of these were two actual deposits of bronze-headed shafts.

As the Minoan road was followed up in 1905, it led the explorers towards an important building in the face of the hill to the north-west. Its exploration was rendered extremely difficult by the fact that its masonry ran right back into the side of the

hill, which was covered by an olive wood, beneath whose roots lay a stratum made up of the remains of Græco-Roman houses. But the building, when explored, proved to be well worth the labour, for the Little Palace, as it is called, was an important structure with a frontage of over 114 feet, and its pillared hall was worthy of comparison even with the fine rooms of its great neighbour. In Late Minoan times part of this fine hall had been used as a shrine, and in it were found, along with the usual 'horns of consecration,' three fetish idols, grotesque natural concretions of quasi-human type. Of these, the largest had some resemblance to a woman of ample contours, while a smaller nodule suggested the figure of an infant, and near it was a rude representation of a Cretan wild-goat. The third nodule was of apelike aspect. In view of all the religious associations of Crete, it can scarcely be doubted that these grotesque images, 'not made with hands,' represent Mother Rhea, the infant Zeus, and the goat Amaltheia. The cult of stones, meteorites and concretions such as these of the Little Palace, has been widespread in all ages; one has only to remember the black stone which forms the most sacred treasure of Mecca, the black stone which stood in the Temple of the Great Mother at Rome, and the image of the great goddess Diana at Ephesus, 'which fell down from Jupiter.' Hesiod's story of how Kronos or Saturn devoured a stone under the belief that he was swallowing the infant Zeus evidently belongs to the recollections

of a worship in which such natural idols as these were adored.

Hitherto Knossos had yielded only one small and inadequate representation of that seafaring enterprise upon which the Minoan power rested, though even this had, in its own way, a certain suggestiveness of the romance and terror of the sea. It was a seal-impression, found in 1903, in the Temple Repositories, on which a great sea-monster, with dog's head and open jaws, is seen rising from the waves and attacking a fisherman, who stands up in his light skiff endeavouring to defend himself. The Little Palace yielded a somewhat more adequate representation of the Minoan marine in the shape of another seal-impression, which showed part of a vessel carrying one square sail, and propelled also by a single bank of oars, whose rowers sit under an awning. Imposed upon the figure of the vessel is that of a gigantic horse, and the impression has been construed as a record of the first importation of the thoroughbred horse into Crete, probably from Libya, an interpretation which seems to demand a certain amount of faith and imagination, for Mosso's criticism, that 'the perspective is faulty,' is extremely mild. But at least the representation of the vessel itself gives us some idea of the galleys which maintained the Minoan peace in the Ægean.

Among other treasures yielded by the Little Palace was a vessel of black steatite in the shape of a bull's head. The idea was already familiar





(1) PALACE WALL, WEST SIDE. MOUNT JUKTAS IN BACKGROUND (*p.* 84)

(2) BATHROOM, KNOSSOS

from other examples, but the execution of this specimen was beyond comparison fine. 'The modelling of the head and curly hair,' says Dr. Evans, 'is beautifully executed, and some of the technical details are unique. The nostrils are inlaid with a kind of shell like that out of which cameos are made, and the one eye which was perfectly preserved presented a still more remarkable feature. The eye within the socket was cut out of a piece of rock-crystal, the pupil and iris being indicated by means of colours applied to the lower face of the crystal which had been hollowed out, and had a certain magnifying power.'* Students of Early Egyptian art will be reminded of the details of the eyes in the statues of Rahotep and Nefert, and in the bronze statue of Pepy. 'Even after the Cnossian ivories, faience figurines, and faience and plaster reliefs,' writes Mr. Hogarth, 'after the Cnossian and Haghia Triadha frescoes, after the finest "Kamares" pottery, and the finest intaglios, the Vaphio goblets and the Mycenæ dagger blades, one was still not prepared for the bull's head *rhyton* . . . with its painted transparencies for eyes, and its admirable modelling, and the striking contrast between the black polished steatite of the mass and the creamy cameo shell of the inlay work.'†

Within the palace proper, the work of 1907 witnessed the discovery of a huge beehive chamber excavated in the rock underlying the Southern Portico.

* The *Times*, August 27, 1908.

† *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1908, pp. 600, 601.

It had been filled in with later débris and sherds of the Middle Minoan period, and evidently belonged to a period antedating that of the construction of even the earliest palace. Its floor was only reached in 1908 by a small shaft at the depth of 52 feet from the summit of its cupola; and as yet the floor remains largely unexplored, and may be expected to furnish valuable information as to the Early Minoan culture. Professor Murray has suggested that this huge underground vault may be the actual Labyrinth of the legend, the underground Temple of the Bull-God, and the scene of the dark tragedies which belong to the story of the Minotaur; but for the confirmation or negation of this suggestion we must wait until the great vault itself has been thoroughly explored.

Such, then, have been the outstanding results of the excavation of the ancient palace of the Cretan Sea-Kings, so far as it has yet proceeded. Of the wealth of material which has been brought to light much, of course, still waits, and, perhaps, may long wait, for interpretation. The facts are there, but the significance of them is not always easily discerned. But, at least, the importance of the supreme fact cannot be questioned; the emergence of this magnificent relic of a civilization, so great and so advanced as to fill the mind with wonder, so curiously corroborating the ancient legends as to the greatness and power of the House of Minos, and yet so absolutely lost as to have left no trace of itself, save in romantic story, until the patience and skill of

present-day explorers restored its relics to the light of day to tell, though as yet only imperfectly, their own tale of splendour and disaster.

The interpretation and co-ordination of the immense body of material gathered by Dr. Evans must for long be the work of scholars. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that when the Minoan script has at length yielded up its secrets we shall be able to comprehend clearly those historical outlines of the rise and magnificence and fall of a great monarchy and culture, which at present have to be cautiously and sometimes precariously inferred from the indications afforded by scraps of potsherd and fragments of stone or metal. And then the actual story of the House of Minos will appeal to all. To-day, perhaps, the main impression left on the ordinary student by this resurrection is one of sadness. Here was a kingdom so great and so imposing, a civilization so highly advanced and so full of the joy of living. And it has all passed away and been forgotten, with its vivid life, and its hopes and fears; and we can only wonder how life looked to the men and women who peopled the courts of the vast palace, and what part was played by them in the fragments of old legend that have come down to us.

The pathos of this aspect of his discoveries has not been missed by the explorer. Writing of the restoration of the Queen's apartment of the palace, a restoration rendered necessary by the decomposing action of wind and rain on the long-buried materials, Dr. Evans says: 'From the open court to the east

and the narrower area that flanks the inner section of the hall, the light pours in between the piers and columns just as it did of old. In cooler tones it steals into the little bathroom behind. It dimly illumines the painted spiral frieze above its white gypsum dado, and falls below on the small terra-cotta bath-tub, standing much as it was left some three and a half millenniums back. The little bath bears a painted design of a character that marks the close of the great "Palace Style." By whom was it last used? By a Queen, perhaps, and mother, for some "Hope of Minos"—a hope that failed.'*

The little bath-tub in the Queen's Megaron at Knossos takes its place with the children's toys of the Twelfth Dynasty town at Kahun in bringing home to us the actual humanity of the people who used to be paragraphs in Lemprière's 'Classical Dictionary' or Rollin's 'Ancient History.'

* The *Times*, August 27, 1908.

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CHAPTER VI

PHÆSTOS, HAGIA TRIADA, AND EASTERN CRETE

We have followed the fortunes of the excavations at Knossos in considerable detail, not only as being the most important, but as illustrating also in the fullest manner the legendary and religious history of Crete. But they are very far from being the only important investigations which have been carried on in the island, and it may even be said that, had Knossos never been excavated, it would still have been possible, from the results of the excavations made at other sites, to deduce the conclusion which has been arrived at as to the supreme position of Crete in the early Ægean civilization.

Both in the Iliad and the Odyssey Phæstos is mentioned along with Knossos as one of the chief towns of Crete; and it is at and near Phæstos that the most extensive and important remains of Minoan culture have been discovered, apart from the work at Knossos. The splendid valley of the Messara, on the southern side of the island, is dominated towards its seaward end by three hills, rising in steps one above the other, and on the lowest of the

three, overlooking the plain, stood the Palace of Phæstos, the second great seat of the Minoan lords of Crete. As in the case of Knossos, a few blocks of hewn stone, standing among the furrows of the cornfield which occupied the site, were the only indications of the great structure which had once crowned the hill, and it was the existence of these which induced the Italian Archæological Mission to attempt the excavation. In April, 1900, the first reconnaissance of the ground was made, with no very encouraging results. By September of the same year the great palace had been discovered, though, of course, the full revelation of its features was a matter of much longer time. The work has been carried on by Professor Halbherr, Signor Pernier, and others, concurrently with the excavations of Dr. Evans; and the result has been the revelation of a palace, similar in many respects to the House of Minos at Knossos, though on a somewhat smaller scale, and characterized, like the Labyrinth, by distinct periods of building. At Phæstos, indeed, the remains of the earlier palace, consisting of the Theatral Area and West Court, with the one-columned portico at its south end, are of earlier date than the existing important architectural features at Knossos, belonging to the period known as Middle Minoan II., the time when the beautiful polychrome Kamares ware was in its glory, while the main scheme of the palace at Knossos, as at present existing, must be placed somewhere in the following period, Middle Minoan III.

This first palace of Phæstos had been destroyed, like the early palace at Knossos, but not at the same time, for it apparently lasted till the beginning of the Late Minoan period, while at Knossos the catastrophe of the first palace took place at the end of Middle Minoan II. From this fact it has been suggested that the first destruction of Knossos was the result of civil war, in which the lords of Phæstos overthrew their northern brethren of the greater palace, but the evidence seems somewhat scanty to bear such an inference.

After the catastrophe at Phæstos, a thick layer of lime mixed with clay and pebbles was thrown over the remains of the ruined structure as a preparation for the rebuilding of the palace, and thus the relics of the earlier building, which are now unveiled in close connection with the later work, though on a rather lower level, were completely covered up before the second palace rose upon the site. The Theatral Area at Phæstos to some extent resembles that of Knossos, but is simpler, lacking the tier of steps at right angles to the main tier, and lacking also the Bastion, or Royal Box, which at Knossos occupies the angle of the junction of the two tiers. It consists of a paved court, ending, on the west side, in a flight of ten steps, more than 60 feet in length, behind which stands a wall of large limestone blocks. As at Knossos, a flagged pathway ran across the area, obliquely, however, in this case. Beneath the structure of the second palace were discovered some of the chambers of the earlier

building, with a number of very fine Kamares vases (Plate XXVI.).

But the chief glory of the palace at Phæstos is the great flight of steps, 45 feet in width, which formed its state entrance, the broadest and most splendid staircase that ever a royal palace had (Plate XXVI.). 'No architect,' says Mosso, 'has ever made such a flight of steps out of Crete.' At the head of the entrance staircase stood a columned portico, behind which was the great reception-hall of the palace. The halls and courts of Phæstos are comparable for spaciousness even with the finest of those at Knossos, and, indeed, the Megaron, so called (wrongly), of Phaestos is a more spacious apartment than the Hall of the Double Axes at the sister palace, the area of the Phæstos chamber being over 3,000 square feet, as against the 2,000 odd square feet of the Hall of the Double Axes. The Central Court, 150 feet long by 70 broad, is a fine paved quadrangle, but has not the impressiveness of the Central Court at Knossos, with its area of about 20,000 square feet.

On the whole, the two palaces wonderfully resemble each other in the general ideas that determine their structure, though, of course, there are many variations in detail. But, as contrasted with the sister palace, the stately building at Phæstos has exhibited a most extraordinary dearth of the objects of art which formed so great a part of the treasures of Knossos. Apart from the Kamares vases and one graceful flower fresco, little of im-

portance has been found. The comparative absence of metal-work at Knossos can be explained by the greed of the plunderers who sacked the palace; but Phæstos is almost barren, not of metal-work alone. All the more interesting, therefore, was the discovery, made in 1908, of the largest inscribed clay tablet which has yet been found on any Minoan site. This was a disc of terra-cotta, 6·67 inches in diameter, and covered on both sides with an inscription which coils round from the centre outwards. 'It is by far the largest hieroglyphic inscription yet discovered in Crete. It contains some 241 signs and 61 sign groups, and it exhibits the remarkable peculiarity that every sign has been separately impressed on the clay while in a soft state by a stamp or punch. It is, in fact, a printed inscription.'* One of the hieroglyphs, frequently repeated, is the representation of the head of a warrior wearing a feathered headdress which remarkably resembles the crested helmets of the Pulosathu, or Philistines, on the reliefs of Ramses III. at Medinet Habu. From his analysis of the various signs Dr. Evans has concluded that the inscription is not Cretan, but may represent a script, perhaps Lycian, in use in the coast-lands of Asia Minor. No interpretation of the writing can yet be given, but Dr. Evans has pointed out evidences of a metrical arrangement among the signs, and has suggested that the in-

* A. J. Evans, 'Scripta Minoa,' p. 24.

scription may conceivably be a hymn in honour of the Anatolian Great Mother, a goddess who corresponded to the Nature Goddess worshipped in Minoan Crete, whose traditions have survived under the titles of Rhea, Britomartis, Aphrodite Ariadne, and Artemis Dictynna. The pottery in connection with which it was found dates it to at least 1600, perhaps to 1800, B.C.

The hill of Hagia Triada, about two miles to the north-west of Phæstos, proved sufficiently fruitful to compensate the Italian explorers for the incomprehensible barrenness of Phæstos. Here stand the ruins of the Venetian church of St. George, itself built of stone which was hewn originally by Minoan masons. The retaining wall of the raised ground in front of the church had given way, exposing a section of archæological relics, Minoan potsherds, and fragments of alabaster, to a depth of more than six feet; and this accidental exposure led to the discovery of the Royal Villa, which the lords of Phæstos had erected as a dependency of the great palace, or as a country seat. Hagia Triada proved to be as rich in objects of artistic interest as Phæstos had been poor. Some of the fresco work discovered, in particular a scene with a cat hunting a red pheasant, reminiscent of the hunting-cat scene on the Mycenæ dagger-blade, is of extraordinary merit. The cat scene is judged by Professor Burrows to be superior in vivacity to the famous Egyptian Eighteenth Dynasty tomb-picture of the marsh-fowler with the trained cat, though to those familiar with

the wonderful dash of the Egyptian work in question this will seem a hard saying.

There can be nothing but admiration, however, for the three astonishing vases of black soapstone which were discovered at the villa. They remain a most convincing evidence of the maturity of Minoan art, and the mastery to which it had attained over the expression of the human form in low relief. It has been already noticed that the fine Minoan pottery is largely an imitation of earlier work in metal, and this is true also of these stone vases. What the Minoan craftsman was capable of when he was allowed to deal with the precious metals we can see from the few specimens which have survived to the present time. The Vaphio gold cups, with their bull-trapping scenes, are generally admitted now to be of Cretan workmanship, though found in the Peloponnese, and Benvenuto Cellini himself need not have been ashamed to turn out such work, admirable alike in design and execution. Little of such gold-work has survived, for obvious reasons. The metal was too precious to escape the plunderer in the evil days which fell upon the Minoan Empire; and the artistic value of the vases and bowls would seem trifling to the conquerors in comparison with the worth of the metal.

But the artists of the time worked not only in the precious metals, but also in stone, trying to reproduce there the forms with which they had decorated the vessels wrought in the costlier medium. Probably, when the steatite was worked to its finished shape,

it was covered with a thin coating of gold-leaf—at least—this suggestion, originally made by Evans, has been confirmed in one instance, where part of the gold-leaf was found still adhering to a vase discovered at Palaikastro by Mr. Currelly. In the case of the Hagia Triada vases the gold-coated steatite had no charms for the plunderer, who merely stripped off the gold-leaf and left its foundation to testify to us of the skill of these ancient craftsmen. The largest of the three stands 18 inches in height. It is divided by horizontal bands into four zones. Three of these show boxers in all attitudes of the prize-ring—striking, guarding, falling; while the second zone from the top exhibits one of the bull-grappling scenes so common in Minoan art, with two charging bulls, one of them tossing on his horns a gymnast who appears to have missed his leap and paid the penalty. The figures are admirably modelled and true to nature, save for the convention of the exaggeratedly slender Minoan waist, which seems to create an impression of unusual height and length of limb. The second vase (Plate XXVII.) is much smaller, and represents a procession which has been variously interpreted as a band of soldiers or marines returning in triumph from a victory, or as a body of harvesters marching in some sort of harvest thanksgiving festival. This interpretation seems, on the whole, the more probable of the two. In the middle of the procession is a figure, interesting from the fact that he is so different from his companions. He has not the usual pinched-in waist of

the Cretans, but is quite normally developed, and he bears in his hand the *sistrum*, or metal rattle, which was one of the regular sacred musical instruments of the Egyptians. In all probability he is meant to represent an Egyptian priest, though what he is doing in a Cretan festival it is hard to tell. The three figures, possibly of women, who are following him, have their mouths wide open, and are evidently singing lustily. One of the figures, that of an elderly man, who appears to be the chief of the party, is clad in a curious, copelike garment, which may be either a ceremonial robe or a wadded cuirass. Apart from all questions of what kind of incident the artist meant to represent, the artistic value of his work is unquestionable. It has been said of this little vase that 'not until the fifth century B.C. should we find a sculptor capable of representing, with such absolute truth, a party of men in motion.'

The smallest of the three vases, only 4 inches in height, bears the representation of a body of soldiers with heads and feet showing above and below their great shields, which are locked together into a wall. The shields are evidently covered with hide, as the bulls' tails still show upon them. But the interest centres in two figures which stand apart from the others. One seems to be a chieftain or general; he has long, flowing hair, a golden collar round his neck, and bracelets on his arms, while in his outstretched right hand he holds a long staff, which may be the shaft of a lance, or, more probably, an emblem of authority, like the staves carried by Egyptian nobles

and officials. His legs are covered halfway up to the knee by a genuine pair of puttees, five turns of the bandage being clearly marked. He appears to be giving orders to the other figure, perhaps that of a captain or under-officer, who stands before him in an attitude of respectful attention. The captain is slightly lower in stature than his chief, though this may be due to the fact that room has had to be found for the tall curving plume of the low helmet which he wears. His neck is adorned with a single torque, and he carries a long heavy sword sloped over his right shoulder. Instead of wearing puttees, like his commander, he wears half-boots, like those on the figurine discovered by Dawkins at Petsofa. Neither the chieftain nor his officer appears to wear any defensive armour; their only clothing is a scalloped loin-cloth, slightly more heavily bordered in the case of the chief than in that of the soldier; and the modelling of the bodies, with the indications of muscular development, particularly in the legs of the chieftain, is exceedingly fine, and of an accuracy marvellous when the diminutive scale of the figures is considered. The little vase is a valuable document for the appearance and equipment of the warriors of those far-off times, but it is also a treasure of art. 'The ideal grace and dignity of these two figures,' says Professor Burrows, 'the pose with which they throw head and body back, is beyond any representation of the human figure hitherto known before the best period of Archaic Hellenic art.'

Hagia Triada

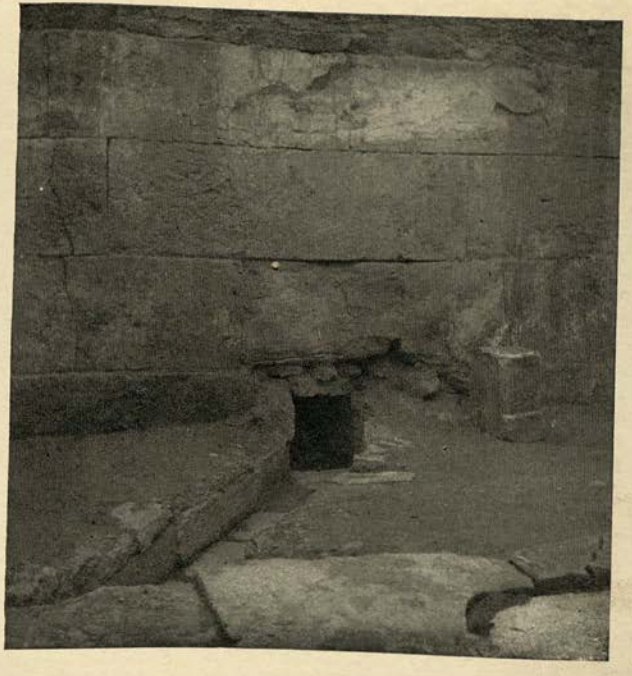
The interest of another of the Hagia Triada finds arises from the fact that it appears to represent a religious ceremony in honour of the dead. The object in question is a limestone sarcophagus covered with plaster, on which various funerary ceremonies are painted. The artistic merit of the work is small, for the figures are badly drawn and carelessly painted, and in all likelihood represent the decaying art of the Third Late Minoan period; but the subjects and their arrangement are of importance (Plate XXVIII.). On one side of the sarcophagus a figure stands against the door of a tomb. He is closely swathed, the arms being within his wrappings, and his attitude is so immobile as to suggest that he is dead. Towards him advance three figures, one bearing something which, by a stretch of charity, may be described as the model of a boat, the others bearing calves, which, curiously enough, are represented, like the great bulls of the frescoes, as in full gallop. At the other end of the panel a priestess pours a libation into an urn standing between two Double Axes, with birds perched upon them. Behind the priestess is a woman carrying over her shoulders a yoke, from which hang two vessels, while behind her, again, comes a man dressed in a long robe, and playing upon a seven-stringed lyre. On the opposite side of the sarcophagus, the painting, much defaced, shows another priestess before an altar, with a Double Axe standing beside it, a man playing on a flute, and five women moving in procession. On the ends of the sarcophagus are pictures, in one case

of a chariot drawn by two horses, and driven by two women; in the other, of a chariot drawn by griffins and driven by a woman, who has beside her a swathed figure, perhaps again representing a dead person. The figures of the lyre and flute players are interesting as affording very early information concerning the forms of European musical instruments. The double flute employed shows eight perforations, and probably the full number, allowing for those covered by the player's hands, was fourteen. The lyre approximates to the familiar classic form, and the number of its strings shows that Terpander can no longer claim credit as being the inventor of the seven-stringed lyre, which was in use in Crete at least eight centuries before the date at which his instrument was mutilated by the unsympathetic judges at Sparta to put him on a level with his four-stringed competitors.

More important, however, is the suggestion of Egyptian influence in the grouping of the figures. No one familiar with the details of the ceremony of 'opening the mouth' of the deceased, so continually represented in Egyptian funerary scenes, can fail to recognize the original inspiration of the scene on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus. The tomb in the background, the stiff swathed figure propped like a log in front of it, the leafy branch before the dead man, taking the place of the bunches of lotus-blooms, the offerings of meat, and the sacrifice of the bull—this is an Egyptian funeral with the mourners dressed in Cretan clothes. We have



A FLIGHT OF THE QUADRUPLE STAIRCASE (*p.* 85)



WALL WITH DRAIN (*p.* 98)

already seen a priest from the banks of the Nile brandishing his sistrum in the Harvest Procession; and the sarcophagus suggests that Egyptian religious influence was telling, if not on the actual views of the Cretans as to the state of man after death, at all events upon the ceremonial by means of which these views were expressed. Phæstos and Hagia Triada, we must remember, owing to their position, would be more exposed to Egyptian influence than even Knossos, where traces of it are not lacking.

The villa at Hagia Triada showed the same attentive care for sanitary arrangements which has been already noticed at Knossos. Mosso has noted an illustration of the honesty with which the work had been executed. 'One day, after a heavy downpour of rain, I was interested to find that all the drains acted perfectly, and I saw the water flow from sewers through which a man could walk upright. I doubt if there is any other instance of a drainage system acting after 4,000 years.'

The excavations at Knossos, Phæstos, and Hagia Triada have yielded, in the main, evidence of the splendour of the Minoan Kings; but other sites in the island, while presenting perhaps nothing so striking, have added largely to our knowledge of the common life of the Minoan race. At Gournia an American lady, Miss Harriet Boyd (now Mrs. Hawes), made the remarkable discovery of a whole town, mainly dating from the close of the Middle Minoan period, though the site had been occupied from the beginning of the Bronze Age. Gournia

had had its modest palace, occupying an area of about half an acre, with its adaptation, on a diminutive scale, of the Knossian Theatral Area, its magazines, and its West Court, where palace and town met, as at Knossos, for business purposes. But the main interest of the little town centred in its shrine and in the houses of the burghers, with their evidences of a wonderfully even standard of comfortable and peaceful life, by no means untinged with artistic elegance.

The shrine, discovered in 1901, stood in the very heart of the town, and was reached by a much-worn paved way. The sacred enclosure was only some 12 feet square, and Mrs. Hawes is inclined to believe that its rough walls never stood more than 18 inches high, forming merely a little *temenos*, in which stood a sacred tree, and the small group of cult objects which were still huddled together in a corner of the shrine. 'It is true that they are very crude, made in coarse terra-cotta, with no artistic skill; nevertheless, they are eloquent, for they tell us that the Great Goddess was worshipped in the town-shrine of Gournia, as in the Palace of Knossos. Here were her images twined with snakes, her doves, the "horns of consecration," the low, three-legged altar-table, and cultus vases. To complete the list, a potsherd was found with the Double Axe moulded upon it, an indication, perhaps, that some who claimed kin with the masters of Crete paid their devotions at this unpretentious shrine.'* The

* 'Crete the Forerunner of Greece,' p. 98.

smallness of the shrine at Gournia may be compared with the smallness of the sacred rooms at Knossos, and seems to have been characteristic of the Minoan worship.

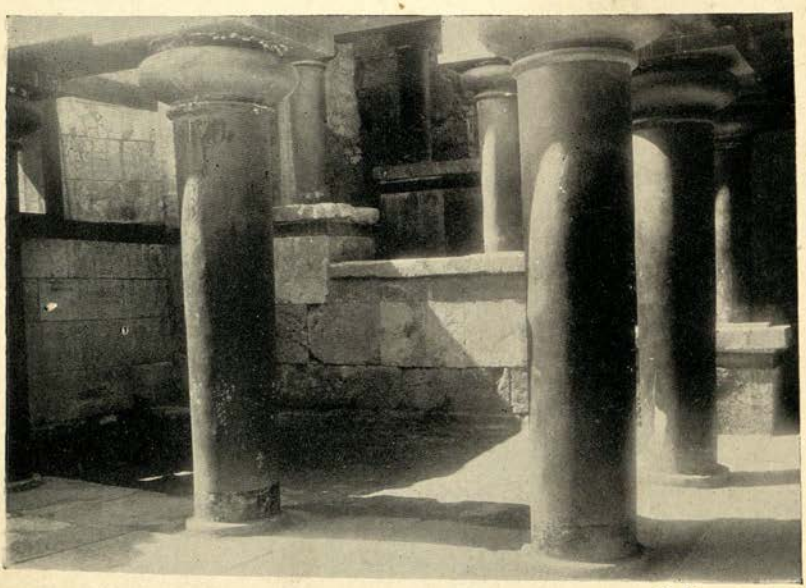
The 5-feet-broad roadways of the town, neatly paved, are conclusive evidence of the infrequent use of wheeled vehicles. Flush with their borders stand the fronts of the houses. Two-storey houses were common, some of them with a basement storey beneath the ground-floor when the slope of the hill admitted of such an arrangement. In all likelihood the general appearance of the homes was much like that of the comfortable-looking houses depicted on the faïence plaques of Knossos, already referred to. Even ordinary craftsmen's houses have six to eight rooms, while those of the wealthier burghers have perhaps twice as many. Here and there evidences of the former occupations of the inhabitants came to light—a complete set of carpenter's tools in one house, a set of loom weights in another, the block-mould in which a smith had cast his tools in a third. That the citizens of the little town were not entirely ignorant of letters was evidenced by the presence of a tablet bearing an inscription in the linear script of Knossos, Class A, and the beauty of their painted pottery shows that they were by no means lacking in refinement and artistic feeling. The town was sacked and burned about 1500 B.C., as its discoverer thinks, perhaps a century before the fall of the great palace at Knossos. Partially reoccupied, like other Cretan sites, during the Third Late Minoan period,

it has since then lain tenantless, waiting the day when its ruined houses should be revealed again to testify to the quiet and peaceful prosperity that reigned under the ægis of the great sea-power of the House of Minos.

At Palaikastro another town of closely-packed houses, covering a space of more than 400 by 350 feet, has been revealed. Its existing remains are of somewhat later date than those of Gournia, and the houses are, on the whole, rather larger, but their general style is much the same. Near the town, at Petsofa, Professor J. L. Myres has unearthed, among a wealth of other votive offerings, a number of curious clay figurines, interesting as being among the earliest examples of polychrome decoration (they belong to Middle Minoan I., and are painted in a scheme of black and white, red and orange), but still more interesting—'with their open corsage, wide-standing collars, high shoe-horn hats, elaborate crinolines, and their general impression of an inaccurate attempt at representing Queen Elizabeth'—as evidence of how utterly unlike was the costume of prehistoric woman in the Ægean area to the stately and simple lines of the classic Greek dress.

The Cretan discoveries have tended as much as any work of recent years to reduce the extravagant claims which used to be put forward on behalf of the Phœnicians as originators of many of the elements of ancient civilization, and evidence is now forthcoming to show that originality in even their most famous and characteristic industry, the dyeing of





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(1) HALL OF THE DOUBLE AXES (*p.* 86)

(2) GREAT STAIRCASE, KNOSSOS (*p.* 86)

robes with the renowned 'Tyrian purple,' must be denied to them and claimed for the Minoans. In 1903, Messrs. Bosanquet and Currelly found on the island of Kouphonisi (Leuke), off the south-east coast of Crete, a bank of the pounded shell of the murex from which the purple dye was obtained, associated with pottery of the Middle Minoan period; and in 1904 they discovered at Palaikastro two similar purple shell deposits, in either case associated with pottery of the same date.

At Zakro, on the eastern coast of the island, Mr. Hogarth has excavated the remains of what must have been an important trading-station. In one single house of one of its merchants he came upon 500 clay seal-impressions, with specimens of almost every type of Cretan seal design, which had evidently been used for sealing bales of goods. Some of the Zakro pottery also was of extreme beauty, one specimen in particular, conspicuous from the fact that its delicate decoration had been laid on subsequent to the firing of the vessel, and could be removed by the slightest touch of the finger, showing evident traces of Egyptian influence in its adaptation of the familiar lotus design of Nilotic decorative art (Plate XXIX. 2).

On the tiny island of Mokhlos, only some 200 yards off the northern coast of Crete, to which it was probably united in ancient days, Mr. Seager has excavated, in 1907 and 1908, an Early Minoan necropolis, from which have come some remarkable specimens of the skill with which the ancient Cretan

workmen could handle both stone and the precious metals. Scores of beautiful vases of alabaster, breccia, marble, and soapstone, wrought in some cases to the thinness of a modern china cup, suggest at once the protodynastic Egyptian bowls of diorite and syenite, and show that if the Cretan took the idea from Egyptian models, he was not behind his master in the skill with which he carried it out. Not less surprising is the work in gold, which includes 'fine chains—as beautifully wrought as the best Alexandrian fabrics of the beginning of our era—artificial leaves and flowers, and (the distant anticipation, surely, of the gold masks of the Mycenæ graves) gold bands with engraved and *repoussé* eyes for the protective blinding of the dead.'*

Excavating outside the area of the palace at Knossos, Dr. Evans opened, on a hill known as Zafer Papoura, about half a mile north of the palace, a large number of Minoan tombs dating from the Third Middle Minoan period onwards. They revealed a civilization still high, though giving evidence of gradual decline in its later stages. The earlier tombs provided, what had been singularly lacking at Knossos, a number of fine specimens of the 'stirrup-' or 'false-necked' vase. There was also a number of bronze vessels and weapons, including swords, some of which were nearly a metre in length. In one tomb, which had evidently belonged to a chieftain, there was found a short sword of elaborate workmanship, with a pommel of

* A. J. Evans, the *Times*, August 27, 1908.

translucent agate, and a gold-plated hilt, on which was engraved a scene of a lion chasing and capturing one of the Cretan wild-goats. The occurrence in some of the tombs of a long rapier and a shorter sword or dagger is unexpected, as there are no representations of the two weapons being worn together in Minoan warfare. Mr. Andrew Lang has made the picturesque suggestion that we may have here an anticipation of the duelling custom of the Elizabethan age, in which the dagger was held in the left hand, and used for parrying thrusts, or for work at close quarters, as in the savage encounter between Sir Hatton Cheek and Sir Thomas Dutton at Calais in 1610.

On the hill of Isopata, between Knossos and the sea, Dr. Evans also discovered a stately sepulchre, whose occupant had evidently been some Minoan King of the Third Middle period. The tomb consisted of a rectangular chamber measuring about 8 by 6 metres, and built of courses of limestone blocks, which projected one beyond the other until they met in a high gable, forming a false arch similar to those of the beehive tombs at Mycenæ. The back wall of the chamber had a central cell opposite to its blocked entrance, and the portal, also false-arched, led into a lofty entrance-hall, in the side walls of which, facing one another, were two cells, which had been used for interments. The whole was approached by an imposing avenue cut in the solid rock. The tomb had been rifled in ancient days, but there still remained a golden hair-

pin, parts of two silver vessels, and a large bronze mirror; while among the stone vessels found a diorite bowl again recalled the hard stone vessels of the Early Egyptian dynasties.

The Dictæan Cave has already been mentioned as being peculiarly associated with the legends about the birth of Zeus and his relationship with Minos. Hesiod states that Rhea carried the new-born Zeus to Lyttos, and thence to a cavern in Mount Aigaios, the north-west peak of Dicte. Lucretius, Virgil, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus all knew of a story in which the whole childhood of Zeus had been passed in a cave on Dicte, and Dionysius assigns to the Dictæan Cave that finding of the law by Minos which presents so curious a parallel to the giving of the tables of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. Minos, he says, went down into the Sacred Cave, and reappeared with the law, saying that it was from Zeus himself. And the last legend, related by Lucian, places in the same cave that union of Zeus with Europa from which Minos sprang. The Dictæan Cave, then, is of special interest in connection with the origins of the Minoan civilization, or, rather, with the fancies which later minds wove around some of the sacred conceptions of the Minoan civilization. It is a large double cavern, south-west of Psychro, and some 500 feet above the latter place. Its exploration by Mr. Hogarth revealed ample evidence of its early connection with the cult of that divinity upon whom the Greeks foisted their own ideas of Zeus.

A scarped terrace overlooking the slope of the hill gives access to the shallow upper grotto, in which were found the remains of an altar, and close by a table of offerings, while the ground beneath the floor of the cave yielded, in regular stratification, Kamares ware, immediately above the virgin soil; then glazed ware, with cloudy brown stripes on a creamy slip; then regular Mycenæan ware, with the familiar marine and plant designs; and, uppermost, bronze. The lower grotto has at first a sheer fall from the upper one, then slopes away for some 200 feet to an icy pool surrounded with a forest of stalagmites; and in this gloomy cavern the evidence was manifest of an ancient cult of a divinity to whom the Double Axe was sacred. There was a great mass of votive offerings of all sorts — engraved gems, bronze statuettes (including a Twenty-second-Dynasty figure of the Egyptian god Amen-Ra), and an abundance of common rings, pins, brooches, and knives; but the chief feature of the find was the Double Axe, of which numerous specimens were found embedded in the stalagmites around the dark pool at the foot of the cavern, some of them still retaining their original shafts. It is evident that the cave on Dicte was the seat of a very ancient worship, connected with that worship whose emblems were the Double Axe Pillars in the Palace of Knossos, and that this worship, as revealed by the character of the remains in the grotto, goes back to the early days of the Minoan civilization.

Throughout all these explorations, covering a

considerable portion of the island, one common feature presents itself—a feature already noted and commented on in connection with Knossos. Nowhere have we met with anything in the remotest degree resembling the colossal citadel walls which are the most striking feature of Mycenæ and Tiryns. Phæstos and Hagia Triada are as devoid of fortification as Knossos. Gournia and Palaikastro are open towns. Everything points to the existence of a strong and peaceful rule, allowing the natural bent of the island race to develop quietly and steadily during long periods in those lines of work, alike useful and artistic, whose remains excite our admiration to-day, and resting for generation after generation on the sea-power which kept all enemies far from the shores of the fortunate island and guarded the trade-routes of the Ægean.

CHAPTER VII

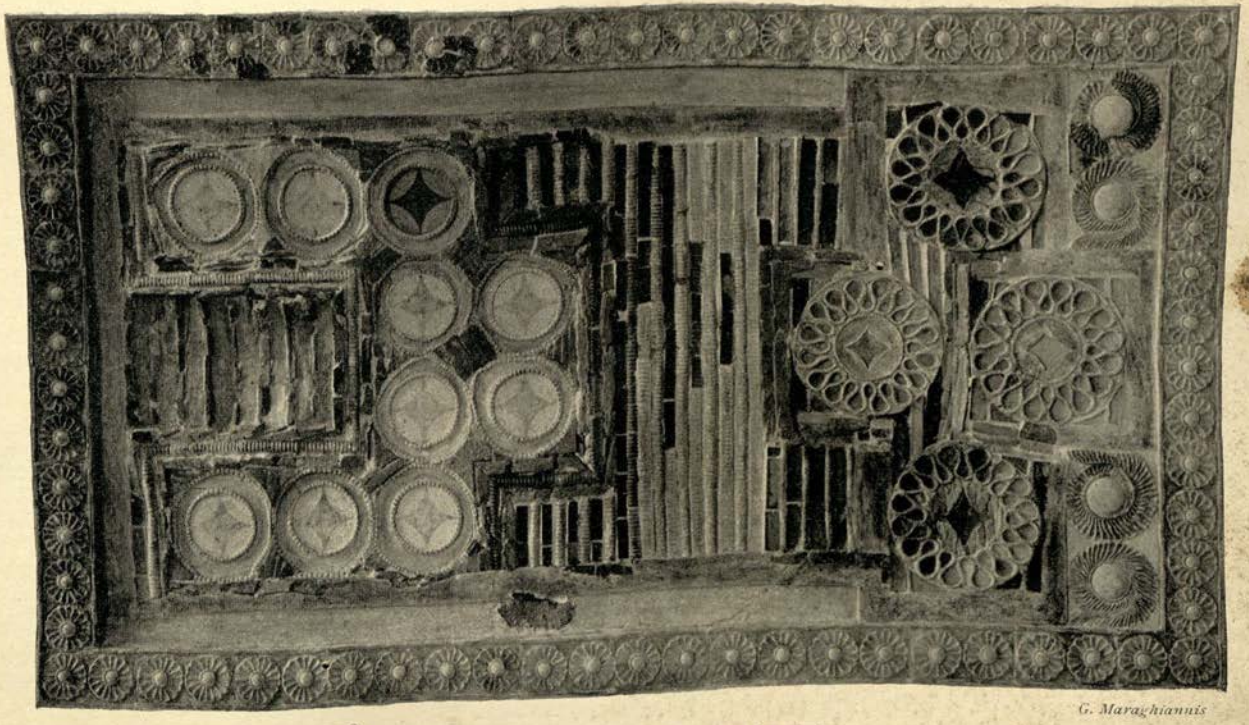
CRETE AND EGYPT

THE question of the relationship between the Minoan civilization and the other great civilizations of the ancient world, particularly those of Babylonia and Egypt, is not only of great intrinsic interest, but also of very considerable importance to the attempt at a reconstruction of the outlines of Minoan history and chronology. For it is only by means of synchronisms with the more or less satisfactorily established chronology of one or other of these kingdoms that even the most approximate system of dating can be arrived at for the various epochs of the great civilization which the Cretan discoveries have revealed. Had it been possible to establish synchronisms with both Babylonian and Egyptian chronology, the result would not only have been satisfactory as regards our knowledge of the Minoan periods, but might have proved to have a secondary outcome of the very greatest importance in the settlement of the acute controversy which at present rages round the chronology of ancient Egypt from the earliest period down to the rise of the New

Empire. As it is, this has so far proved to be impossible by reason of the absence from the chain of the Babylonian link.

It may be held as reasonably certain that for many centuries there was no lack of intercourse and interchange of commodities and ideas between Crete and Asia; indeed, it is beginning to be more and more manifest that in that ancient world there was infinitely more intercommunication between the different peoples than had been suspected. Far from the prehistoric age being a time of stagnation, it was rather a time of ceaseless movement. Perhaps the most striking example of the distance across which communication could take place in almost incredibly early times is afforded by the discovery on the site of ancient Troy—the Second City, roughly contemporary with Early Minoan III.—of a piece of white jade, a stone peculiar to China. By what long and devious routes it had reached the coast of Asia Minor who can say? Yet the fact of its occurrence there proves the fact of communication.

Up to the present time it cannot be said that any object unquestionably Mesopotamian has been found on any Ægean site, nor any object unquestionably Ægean on a Mesopotamian one. But it has been suggested that certain carved ivories found by Layard at Nimrûd in the Palace of Sennacherib show manifest traces of Ægean influence; and in Southern Syria, at all events—at Gezer, Tell-es-Safi, and elsewhere—indisputably Ægean pottery



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THE KING'S GAMING-BOARD (*p.* 87)

and weapons have been discovered in sufficient quantity to show that there was certainly communication between the Minoan civilization and the shores of Asia. Intercourse is suggested also by the obvious communities of religious conception existing between Crete and Asia. In both places the divine spirit is believed to associate itself with sacred pillars, such as the Double Axe pillars at Knossos; in both it is personified as a Woman Goddess, the mother of all life, to whom is added a son, who is also a consort; while the emblems of the ancient cults—the guardian lions of the goddess on the hill, the Double Axe, and the triple pillars with perching doves—are property common to both Crete and Asia. This may not point, however, to a continued intercourse, but only to community at some early point of the history of both races.

Of actual traces of Mesopotamian influence singularly few are to be found in Crete. Dr. Evans has shown the correspondence of a purple gypsum weight found during the second season's excavations at Knossos, with the light Babylonian talent, while the ingots of bronze from Hagia Triada represent the same standard of weight. It may be that the drainage system so highly developed at Knossos and Hagia Triada found its first suggestion in the terra-cotta drain-pipes discovered at Niffur by Hilprecht, though it is by no means obvious that copying should be necessary in such a matter. The clay tablets engraved with hieroglyphic and linear script suggest at once the corresponding and universal use

of the clay tablet for the cuneiform script of Babylonia; and that is practically all that can be said of any connection between the cultures of Crete and Mesopotamia.

The case is quite different, however, when we come to the relations between Crete and the great civilization of the Nile Valley. In this case there is, if not abundance, at all events a sufficiency of evidence as to an intercourse which extended through practically the whole duration of the Minoan Empire. For the Early Dynastic period of Egyptian history the evidence is somewhat slight, and the interpretation of it not always certain. When we come to the Middle Kingdom of Egypt —a period contemporaneous with Middle Minoan II. and III.—it becomes both more abundant and more unquestionable in meaning; while with the New Empire (Eighteenth Dynasty) and Late Minoan II. we reach absolutely firm ground, the correspondence of art motives, and the actual proofs of intercourse, especially on the Egyptian side, being indisputable. Our object, then, in this chapter is to exhibit the evidence of the relationship between Crete and Egypt, and to inquire to what conclusion it leads us concerning the dates of the various periods of Minoan history.

For the earliest period we are left with somewhat scanty evidence. Professor Petrie has found in some of the First Dynasty graves at Abydos vases of black hand-burnished ware, which are very closely allied, both in form and colour, to the primitive

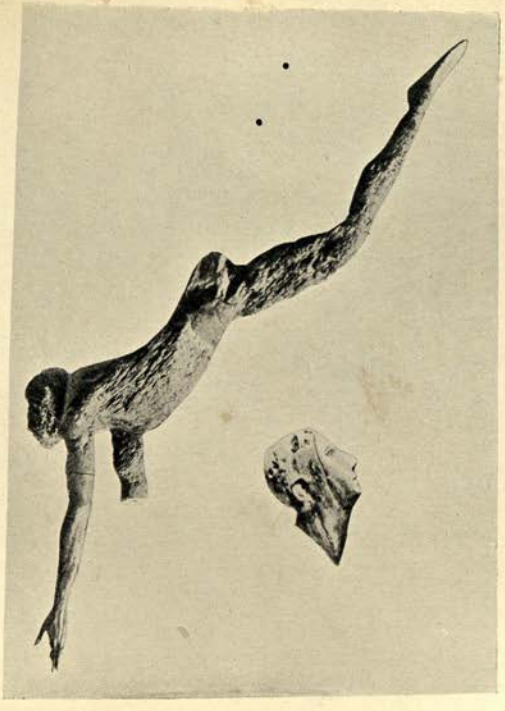
'bucchero' discovered immediately above the Neolithic deposit in the West Court at Knossos; and he has suggested that, as the pottery is not Egyptian in style, it may have been imported from Crete. On various sites in the palace at Knossos there have been found stone vessels of diorite, syenite, and liparite, exquisitely wrought. Now, such work is eminently characteristic of the Early Egyptian Dynastic period, the artists of that time taking a pride in turning out bowls of these intensely hard stones, wrought sometimes to such a degree of fineness as to be translucent. The chances are against these bowls having been imported in later days, as the taste for them gradually died out in Egypt, and 'no ancient nation had antiquarian tastes till the time of the Saïtes in Egypt and of the Romans still later.' The stone vessels discovered by Mr. Seager at Mokhlos, though wrought out of beautiful native materials, betray, according to Dr. Evans, the strong influence of protodynastic Egyptian models. Coming down a little farther, to Early Minoan III., there is evidence of Egyptian influence in the fact that the ivory seals of this period seem to derive their motives from the so-called 'button-seals' of the Sixth Egyptian Dynasty. Mr. H. R. Hall believes that the derivation was the other way about. 'It would seem very probable that this decidedly foreign decoration motive was adopted by the Egyptians from the Ægeans about the end of the Old Kingdom (= Early Minoan III.), so that the Egyptian seal designs are copied from those of the Cretan seal-

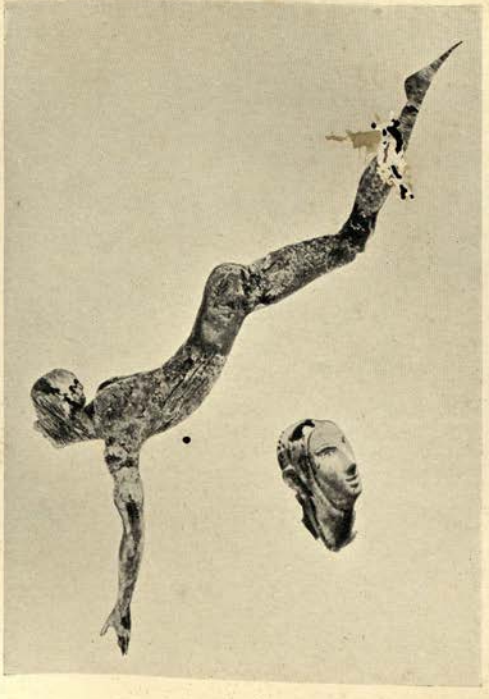
stones, rather than the reverse. Egyptian designs were very ancient, and had the spiral been Egyptian, we should have found it in the art of the Old Kingdom. It was a foreign importation, and its place of origin is evident.'* Whether in this case the Minoan borrowed from the Egyptian or the Egyptian from the Minoan is, however, immaterial; either way the fact of intercourse is established.

We may assume, then, that, in all probability, there was intercourse of some kind between Crete and Egypt as early as the time of the First Egyptian Dynasty, and that by the time of the Sixth Dynasty, which marks the close of the great period of the Old Kingdom in Egypt—the period of the Pyramid Builders (Third to Sixth Dynasty)—intercourse was common. In fact, it may be said that, from the origin of both peoples, the likelihood is that they were in contact. It is possible enough that both the Nilotic and the Minoan civilization sprang from a common stock, and that the Neolithic Cretans and the Neolithic Egyptians were alike members of the same widespread Mediterranean race.

How was the connection between Crete and Egypt maintained at this extremely early period? Professor Petrie believes that it was by the natural and direct sea-route across the Mediterranean. The representations of vessels painted on pre-dynastic Egyptian ware show that the Neolithic Egyptians were familiar, to some extent, with the building and

* Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology, vol. xxxi., part v., p. 222.





IVORY FIGURES AND HEADS FROM KNOSSOS (*p.* 76)

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the use of ships, and Professor Petrie supposes that galleys such as those represented were the ships by means of which the Egyptians and Cretans maintained their intercourse. Mr. Hall, on the other hand, maintains that this is impossible, and that the boats of the pre-dynastic ware are merely small river-craft, totally unfitted for seafaring work.* In his 'Oldest Civilization of Greece' he roundly asserts 'that these boats were the ships which plied between Crete and Egypt some 4,000 years B.C. nothing can ever prove'; and he therefore believes that the communication was kept up by way of Cyprus and the Palestinian coast. But the evidence either way is of so extremely slight a character, and the delineations in question are so rude, that it might as well be said that nothing can ever prove that these boats were *not* the ships which plied between Crete and Egypt. It does not seem obvious why the voyage between Crete and Egypt should be impossible to navigators who could accomplish that between Crete and Cyprus; and if communication were maintained by way of Cyprus, it seems strange that that island should show practically no trace of having been influenced by Minoan civilization until a comparatively late date. 'It was not till the Cretan culture had passed its zenith and was already decadent that it reached Cyprus.'† That the Homeric Greeks were by no means daring navigators does not neces-

* 'Egypt and Western Asia,' p. 129.

† H. R. Hall, Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology, vol. xxxi., part v., p. 227.

sarily imply that an island race, whose whole tradition throughout its history was of sea-power, should have been equally timid. When it is remembered in what type of vessel the Northmen risked the Atlantic passage, one would be slow to believe that even in immediately post-Neolithic times the Cretans could not have evolved a type of boat as adequate to the run between Crete and the Nile mouths as the 'long serpents' were to face the Atlantic rollers.

But however the case may stand with regard to the pre-dynastic period, there can be no question that by the end of the Third Dynasty even Egypt had developed a marine not inadequate to the requirements of the Cretan passage. We know that Sneferu, the last King of the Third Dynasty, sent a fleet of forty ships to the Syrian coast for cedar-wood, and that in his reign a vessel was built of the very respectable length of 170 feet. Coming farther down, we know also that Sahura of the Fifth Dynasty sent a fleet down the Red Sea as far as Punt or Somaliland. And if the Egyptians, by no means a great seafaring race, were able to do such things at this period of their history, surely an island race, whose sole pathway to the outer world lay across the sea, would not be behind them. There can scarcely be any question that, by the time of the Pyramid builders at latest, Cretan galleys were making the voyage to the Nile mouths, and unloading at the quays of Memphis, under the shadow of the new Pyramids, their primitive wares,

among them the rude, hand-burnished black pottery, in return for which they carried back some of the wonderful fabric of the Egyptian stone-workers.

But supposing that the connection between the primitive Minoan civilization and the earliest Dynasties of Egypt is a thing established, what does this enable us to assert as to the date to which we are to ascribe the dawn of the earliest culture that can be called European? Here, unfortunately, we are at once involved in a controversy in which centuries are unconsidered trifles, and a millennium is no more than a respectable, but by no means formidable, quantity. Egyptian chronology may be regarded as practically settled from the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty downwards. There is a general consent of authority that Aahmes, the founder of that Dynasty, began to reign about 1580 B.C., and the dates assigned by the various schools of chronology to the subsequent Dynasties differ only by quantities so small as to be practically negligible. But when we attempt to trace the chronology upwards from 1580 B.C., the consent of authorities immediately vanishes, and is replaced by a gulf of divergence which there is no possibility of bridging. The great divergence occurs in the well-known dark period of Egyptian history between the Twelfth and the Eighteenth Dynasties, where monumental evidence is extremely scanty, almost non-existent, and where historians have to grope for facts with no better light to guide them than is afforded by the History of Manetho, and the torn

fragments of the Turin Papyrus. The traditional dating used to place the end of the Twelfth Dynasty somewhere around 2500 B.C., allowing thus some 900 odd years for the intervening dynasties before the rise of the Eighteenth. The modern German school, however, represented by Erman, Mahler, Meyer, and the American, Professor Breasted, arguing from the astronomical evidence of the Kahun Papyrus, cuts this allowance short by over 700 years, allowing only 208 years for the great gap, and proposing to pack the five Dynasties and the Hyksos domination into that time. Professor Petrie, finally, accepting, like the German school, the astronomical evidence of the Kahun Papyrus, interprets it differently, and pushes back the dates by a complete cycle of 1,460 years, allowing 1,666 years for the gap between the Twelfth Dynasty and the Eighteenth. Thus, even between the traditional and the German dating there is a gulf of 700 years for all dates of the Twelfth Dynasty, while as between the German dating and that of Professor Petrie the gulf widens to over 1,400 years.

Into the question of which system of dating should be adopted it is impossible to enter, though it may be said that if 1,666 years seems a huge allowance for the five Dynasties, 208 years seems almost incredibly small. The result is what concerns us here, and we are faced with the fact that, while the traditional dating places the First Egyptian Dynasty at about 4000 B.C., the German school would bring it down to 3400 B.C., and Professor Petrie thrusts it

back to 5510 B.C. Dr. Evans, in provisionally assigning dates to the periods of Minoan history, formerly drew nearer to the traditional than to either the German dating or that of Professor Petrie; but he has gradually modified this position, and now dates his Middle Minoan II., which synchronizes with the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty, at 2000 B.C., thus practically accepting the chronology of the German school. This would place Early Minoan I., which must be equated with the First Dynasty, about 3400 B.C. Practically, all that can be said with a moderate amount of certainty is that the earliest civilization of Crete, like that of Egypt, was in existence at a period not much later than 3500 B.C., while it is not impossible that it may be 1,500 years older. Even accepting the lower figure, the antiquity of man's first settlements on the hill of Kephala becomes absolutely staggering to the mind. If the growth of deposit on the hill was at the rate of something like 3 feet in a millennium—a reasonable supposition—it follows that we must place the earliest habitations of Neolithic man at Knossos not later than 10000, perhaps as early as 12000 B.C.

It is not till many centuries after the Sixth Egyptian Dynasty had passed away that we come upon fresh evidence of the connection between the two countries. The earlier palaces at Knossos and Phæstos had been built, and the first period of Middle Minoan, with its beginnings of polychrome decoration and its Queen Elizabeth figurines from Petsofa, had come and gone in Crete, while in

Egypt the corresponding period had been marked by the troublous times between the Seventh and the Eleventh Dynasties. But the rise of the Twelfth Dynasty in Egypt marked the beginning of a more stable state of affairs in the Nile Valley, and in this period, which corresponds with Dr. Evans's Middle Minoan II., there are again evidences of touch between the two kingdoms. With regard to absolute dating, we are of course as much in the dark as ever, and may choose between 2000, 2500, and 3459 B.C. In any case, at this point, put it provisionally at 2000 B.C., the Egypt of the Senuserts and Amenemhats and the Crete of Middle Minoan II. are manifestly contemporaneous, and in well-established connection. In Crete this was the period when the beautiful polychrome Kamares ware was at the height of its popularity, and at Kahun, close to the pyramid of Senusert II., Professor Petrie some years ago discovered some unquestionable specimens of this fine ware, which had certainly been imported from Crete, as the fabric is one quite unknown to native Egyptian ceramic art. Even more conclusive was Professor Garstang's discovery, in an untouched tomb at Abydos, of a polychrome vessel in the latest style of the period in company with glazed steatite cylinders, which bear the names of Senusert III. and Amenemhat III., the last great Kings of the Twelfth Dynasty.

But the most interesting link between the two countries is found in the fact that in this period there was erected in Egypt the building which came to be

looked on as the parallel to the Cretan Labyrinth, and which, with a curious inversion of the actual facts, was long supposed to be the original from which the Cretan Labyrinth was derived. The pyramid of Amenemhat III., the greatest King of the great Twelfth Dynasty, and indeed one of the greatest men who ever held the Egyptian sceptre, stood at Hawara, near the mouth of the Fayum. Not far from it Amenemhat erected a huge temple, such as had never been built before, and never was built again, even in that land of gigantic structures. The great building was erected, in a taste eminently characteristic of the Middle Kingdom, of great blocks of fine limestone and crystalline quartzite. It has long since disappeared, having been used as a quarry for thousands of years; but the size of the site, which can still be traced, shows that in actual area the temple covered a space of ground within which Karnak, Luqsor, and the Ramesseum, huge as they all are, could quite well have stood together.

Even in the time of Herodotus enough was still remaining of this vast building to excite his profound wonder and admiration, and it seemed to him a more remarkable structure than even the Pyramids. 'It has,' he says, 'twelve courts enclosed with walls, with doors opposite each other, six facing the north, and six the south, contiguous to one another, and the same exterior wall encloses them. It contains two kinds of rooms, some under ground, and some above ground over them, to the number of 3,000, 1,500 of each.' He was not allowed to inspect the under-

ground chambers. 'But the upper ones, which surpass all human works, I myself saw; for the passages through the corridors, and the windings through the courts, from their great variety, presented a thousand occasions of wonder as I passed from a court to the rooms, and from the rooms to halls, and to other corridors from the halls, and to other courts from the rooms. The roofs of all these are of stone, as also are the walls; but the walls are full of sculptured figures. Each court is surrounded with a colonnade of white stone, closely fitted.'* Herodotus believed that the building belonged to the time of Psamtek I., in which, of course, he was ludicrously far astray, but otherwise there seems no reason to question that his description actually represents what he saw, though no doubt his lively mind somewhat multiplied the number of the rooms.

Pliny the elder, judging from his description, evidently saw much the same thing at Hawara as Herodotus had seen, though time must have somewhat diminished the splendour of the building. Now, to this temple there was already applied in the time of Herodotus the name Labyrinth. It used to be believed that the Hawara Labyrinth gave its name to the Cretan one, and an Egyptian etymology was arranged for the word 'labyrinth,' according to which it would have meant 'the temple at the mouth of the canal.' The Egyptian form of the title, however, is 'a mere figment of the philological imagination.' Probably originality lies in the

* Herodotus II. 148.

other direction. The first palace at Knossos dates from a period certainly as early as, probably somewhat earlier than, the Hawara temple; and since the derivation of the word 'labyrinth' from the Labrys or Double Axe, making the palace the House or Place of the Double Axe, seems quite satisfactory, the Egyptian Labyrinth in all likelihood derived its name from the House of Minos at Knossos. Apart, however, from any mere question of names, there appears the interesting parallel that the two most famous Labyrinths, the first palace at Knossos, and the great Hawara temple, actually belong to the same period—a period when, as we know from the other evidence, there was certainly active intercourse between the two nations.

Mr. Hall has pointed out* the resemblance between the actual building at Knossos and the descriptions left to us of its Egyptian contemporary. The literary tradition of the Labyrinth of Minos is that it was a place of mazy passages and windings, difficult to traverse without a guide or clue, and the actual remains at Knossos show that the palace must have answered very well to such a description, while the feature of the Hawara temple which struck both Herodotus and Pliny was precisely the same. 'The passages through the corridors and the windings through the courts, from their great variety, presented a thousand occasions of wonder.' The resemblance extended to the material of which the buildings were erected. The fine white limestone

* *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1905, part ii.

of Hawara must have closely resembled the shining white gypsum of Knossos, and though the Egyptian Labyrinth has passed away too completely for us to be able to judge of its masonry, yet the splendid building work of the Eleventh Dynasty temple of Mentuhotep Neb-hapet-Ra at Deir-el-Bahri, with its great blocks of limestone beautifully fitted and laid, affords a good Middle Kingdom parallel to the great gypsum blocks of the Knossian palace. Of course we cannot attribute to Cretan influence the style of the Egyptian building in this respect. For hundreds of years the Egyptians had been past masters in the art of great construction with huge blocks of stone, so that, if there is to be any derivation on this point, it may rather have been Crete which followed the example of Egypt. But it may not be altogether a mere coincidence that, in a period of Egyptian history which we know to have been linked with an important epoch of Cretan development, there should have been erected in Egypt a building absolutely unparalleled, so far as we know, among the architectural triumphs of that nation, but bearing no distant resemblance, if the descriptions are to be trusted, to the great palace which the Minoan Sovereigns had newly reared, or were, perhaps, still rearing, for themselves at Knossos. Is it permissible to fancy that the envoys of Amenemhat III. may have brought back to Egypt reports and descriptions of the great Cretan palace which may have fired that King with the desire to leave behind him a memorial, unique among Egyptian buildings, but

inspired by the actual achievements of his brother monarchs in Crete? Whether the idea of this relation between the two buildings be merely fanciful or not, their resemblances add another illustration to the proofs of the close connection between the Minoan and the Egyptian cultures in the third millennium B.C.

With the succeeding Cretan epoch, Middle Minoan III., we come into touch with the dark age of Egyptian history, the great gap covering Dynasties XIII.-XVII., towards the close of which is to be placed the Hyksos domination. As the age was so troubled in Egypt, it is scarcely probable that we shall find much evidence there of any connection between the two lands; but the evidence found on Cretan soil, though slight, is conclusive as to the fact that communication was maintained. For the earlier part of the period we have the statuette, already mentioned as having been found at Knossos, bearing the name of 'Ab-nub's child, Sebek-user, deceased, born of the lady Sat-Hathor.' 'Who Sebek-user was,' as Mr. Hall remarks, 'and how his statuette got to Crete, we have no means of knowing.' But the 'deceased' in the inscription shows that the statuette was a funerary or memorial one, and it is hardly likely that such an object was imported merely for its own sake or for its artistic value, which is slight enough. May it not be that either Ab-nub, the father, or Sebek-user, the son, or both, may have been Egyptians resident at the Court of Knossos, either

as representatives of Egyptian interests or as skilled artificers, and that the statuette is the memorial of one who died far from his native land, but not without friends to see that he did not lack the funerary attentions which would have been his at home? No doubt there was interchange of persons as well as of commodities between the two lands; some of the artists and craftsmen of both countries would naturally go to where there was a demand arising for their work, or where instructors were being sought to teach the new arts; and Ab-nub and his son Sebek-user may have drifted to Knossos in this manner, and found at last their graves there. Were they conceivably responsible for the 'imported alabaster vases dating from the Middle Kingdom of Egypt,' which were found in the royal tomb at Isopata?

Towards the close of this epoch the ceramic art of Knossos shows features which are directly attributable to Egyptian influence. The art of glazing pottery was not a native Cretan, but an Egyptian art; it is in full use in Egypt from the very beginnings of the First Dynasty. But now we find it appearing in a high state of development in Crete in the beautiful faïence reliefs of the wild-goat and kids, the vases with the wild-rose in relief on the lip, and the figurines of the Snake Goddess and her votaresses. The Cretan artists, however, though they borrowed the process, adapted it to their own tastes. In Egypt the native faïence of the time is of strictly conventional type, with black design on

blue; but the Cretan emancipated himself from these limits, and made his faïence reliefs in the polychrome style, which still persisted, though now no longer so prevalent as it had once been.

The disastrous period of the Hyksos domination in Egypt has left but one trace at Knossos, but that is of peculiar interest, for it is the lid of an alabastron bearing the name of the Hyksos King Khyan. It cannot be said that we know any of the Hyksos Kings, but Khyan is the one whose relics are the most widely distributed and have the most interest. The finding of the lid at Knossos, his farthest west, is balanced by the lion, bearing his cartouche, found many years ago at Baghdad, his farthest east, while in his inscriptions he calls himself 'Embracer of territories.' So it has been suggested that the Knossos lid and the Baghdad lion are the scanty relics of a great Hyksos empire which once extended from the Euphrates to the First Cataract of the Nile, and possibly also held Crete in subjection. In all likelihood, however, the idea is merely a dream; certainly so far as regards Crete it is most improbable. In the palmiest days of the Egyptian navy the Pharaohs never held any dominion over Crete, and even Cyprus was never really under their rule. It is much less likely still that a King of the Hyksos race, whose whole tradition is of the land and the desert, should have succeeded in establishing any suzerainty over a race whose whole tradition is of the sea, and which was then in the full pride of its strength.

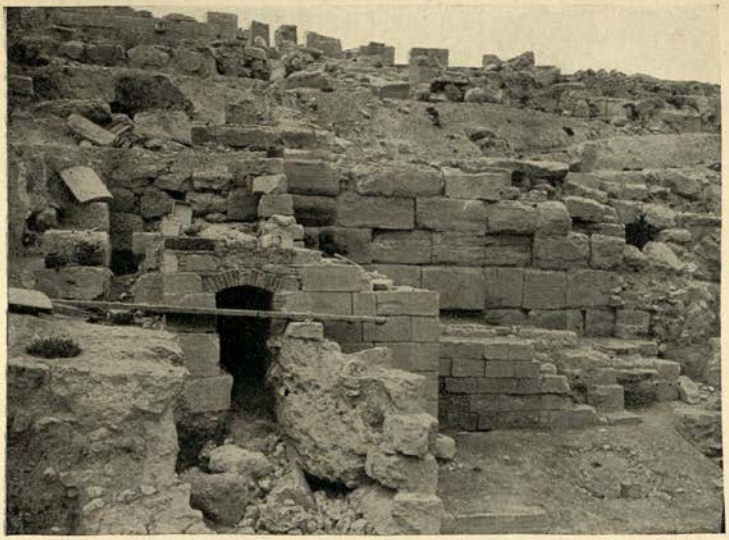
The Sea-Kings of Crete

Another era of history has passed away before we again find Crete and Egypt in close touch with one another. In Crete the last period of Middle Minoan had been succeeded by the first of Late Minoan, in which the great palace of the Middle period was being gradually transformed into a still larger and more magnificent structure, which was not to be completed until the succeeding period. In Egypt the Seventeenth Dynasty had at last, after long hesitation, picked up the gauntlet thrown down by the Hyksos conquerors, and the War of Independence had resulted in the expulsion of the Desert Princes and their race. The conquering Dynasty had been succeeded by the Eighteenth, the Dynasty of Queen Hatshepsut, Tahutmes III., and Amenhotep III., and Egypt was in the full tide of a great revival, alike in world-influence, in trade, and in art. Queen Hatshepsut, who states in one of her inscriptions that 'her spirits inclined towards foreign peoples,' had sent out her squadron to Somaliland, and Tahutmes III. had organized a war-fleet on the Mediterranean coast-line. The ancient Empire of the Nile was opening its arms in every direction to outside influences, and was drawing into the ports of the great river the commercial and artistic products of every known people.

Among the races who are most prominent in the Egyptian records of the period are the Keftiu, who are frequently represented in the paintings of the time, and always with the same characteristic features, the same dress and bearing, the same

products of commerce and art. Who, then, were the Keftiu? The word means the people or the country 'at the back of'—in other words, at the back of 'the Very Green,' as the Egyptians called the Mediterranean. So that the Keftians with whom the merchants and courtiers of Egypt grew familiar in the times of Hatshepsut and Tahutmes III. were to them the men 'from the back of beyond'—the farthest distant people with whom they had any dealings. But what race could correspond to these 'back of beyond' men? In Ptolemaic times the word 'Keftiu' was unquestionably applied to the Phœnicians, who had for long been the great sea-farers and carriers of the Mediterranean; and till recent years it was generally believed that the Keftiu of the Eighteenth Dynasty were Phœnicians also, though their faces, as depicted on the Egyptian wall-paintings, did not bear the slightest trace of Semitic cast. But the discoveries of the last few years have demolished that idea for ever, along with many other beliefs as to the influence of the overrated Phœnicians upon the culture of the Mediterranean area, and the pictures of the Minoans of Knossos have made it certain that the Keftiu of the Eighteenth Dynasty were none others than the ambassadors, sailors, and merchants of the Sea-Kings of Crete. Fortunately, the tomb-painting which has preserved so many interesting details of Egyptian life, was never more assiduously practised or more happily inspired than at this period. In all the chief tombs there are pictured processions of Northerners,

Westerners, Easterners, and Southerners, the North being represented by Semites, the East by the men of Punt, the South by negroes, and the West by the Keftiu; and we can compare the men of the Knossos frescoes with their fellow-countrymen as depicted on the tomb-walls of the Theban grandees, and be certain that, allowing for the differences in the style of art, they are essentially the same people. The tombs which preserve best the figures of the Keftiu are those of Sen-mut and Rekh-ma-ra. That of Sen-mut is the earlier, though only by a generation, or perhaps rather less. He was the architect of Queen Hatshepsut, the man who planned and executed the great colonnaded temple at Deir-el-Bahri, and who set up Hatshepsut's gigantic obelisks. His tomb at Thebes overlooks the temple which he built at his Queen's command to be 'a paradise for Amen,' and on its walls we can see 'the men from the back of beyond' walking in procession, each with his offering to present to the Pharaoh. There can be no question as to who they are. The half-boots and puttees, the decorated girdle compressing the waist, not quite so tightly as in the Minoan representations, the gaily adorned loin-cloth, which is the only article of attire, all are practically identical with the type of such a fresco as that of the Cupbearer at Knossos. The conscientious Egyptian artists have carefully represented also the elaborate coiffure which was characteristic of the Minoans, who allowed their hair to fall in long tails down their shoulders, doing part of it up in a knot





(1) MAIN DRAIN, KNOSSOS (*p.* 98)

(2) TERRA-COTTA DRAIN-PIPES (*p.* 98)

or curl on the top of the head. The tribute-bearers carry in their hands or upon their shoulders great vessels of gold and silver, some of them exactly resembling in shape the Vaphio cups, though much larger than these, some of them of the type of the bronze ewer found in the north-west house at Knossos.

Rekh-ma-ra, in whose tomb are the other notable pictures of the Keftiu, was also a great figure in Egyptian history in the next reign. He was Vizier to Tahutmes III., the conquering Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The pictures on the walls of his tomb are, at least in some cases, evidently more than mere racial studies; they are careful portraits. 'The first man, "The Great Chief of the Kefti, and the Isles of the Green Sea," is young, and has a remarkably small mouth with an amiable expression. His complexion is fair rather than dark, but his hair is dark brown. His lieutenant, the next in order, is of a different type—elderly, with a most forbidding visage, Roman nose, and nut-cracker jaws. Most of the others are very much alike—young, dark in complexion, and with long black hair hanging below their waists and twisted up into fantastic knots and curls on the tops of their heads.'*

These Keftiu, then, were the Minoans of the Great Palace period of Crete, the pre-Hellenic Greeks, the Pelasgi of old Greek tradition, in whose time the great civilization of the Minoan Empire reached its culminating point, and was within a little

* H. R. Hall, 'Egypt and Western Asia,' p. 362.

of its final disaster. It is a fortunate circumstance that Sen-mut and Rekh-ma-ra should have caused them to be portrayed when they did, for in two or three generations more the glory of Knossos had passed away, never to be revived. Greece gave to Egyptian scholars the key to the translation of the hieroglyphics in the Greek version of the Egyptian text on the Rosetta Stone; the paintings of the Theban tombs have paid back an instalment of that debt in showing us the likenesses of those 'Greeks before the Greeks' who dwelt in Crete. Perhaps some day the debt will be fully repaid by the discovery of a bilingual text in Egyptian and Minoan, giving us in hieroglyphics a version of some passage of that Minoan script which now exists only to tantalize us with records of an ancient history which we cannot read. Such a discovery is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility. It is not so long since Boghaz-Keui supplied us with a cuneiform version of the famous treaty between the Egyptians and the Hittites in the time of Ramses II.; perhaps some site in Crete or Egypt may yet provide us with a bilingual treaty between Tahutmes III. and the Minoan Sovereign of his time.

After the time of Tahutmes, the evidences of connection between the two lands grow scanty once more. The fact that the faïence of the time of Amenhotep III. has discarded the old Egyptian tradition of black upon blue, and now rejoices in splendid chocolates, purples, violets, reds, and apple-greens, shows that Cretan influence was still strong.

Fragments of Late Minoan pottery found in abundance on the site of Akhenaten's new capital at Tell-el-Amarna show that even in the reign of this King, the heretic son and successor of Amenhotep III., Crete was still trading with Egypt. But before Akhenaten came to the throne, about 1380 B.C.—possibly twenty years before that event—the great catastrophe which brought the Minoan Empire of Knossos to a close had already happened. The Cretan wares which filtered into Egypt after 1400 B.C. were the products of the Minoan decadence, when the survivors of the Empire of the Sea-Kings—a broken and dwindling race—were still trying to maintain a slowly failing tradition of art under the new masters, perhaps the Mycenæans of the mainland, who, driven forth themselves by the pressure of Northern invaders, had crushed in their turn the gentler sister civilization of Crete.

The Mycenæan 'stirrup-vases' pictured in the tomb of Ramses III. (1202-1170 B.C.), and the representations in the tomb of Imadua of gold cups of the Vaphio type, carry the connection down to the last dregs of the dying race; but by the time of Ramses III. the Minoan kingdom had probably been dead and buried for about two centuries. In fact, with the rise of the Nineteenth Dynasty in Egypt (1350 B.C.), the name of the Keftiu disappears from the Egyptian records, and in the place of the men from the back of beyond there appears a confused jumble of warring sea-tribes, some of them possibly the men who had overthrown the

Minoan Empire, some of them probably representing the broken fragments of that Empire itself, who unite in attacks upon Egypt, but are foiled and overthrown. In the record of the earlier of these invasions, that which took place in the reign of Merenptah (1234 - 1214 B.C.), the successor of Ramses II., it is difficult to trace any names that have Cretan connections. The Aqayuasha may conceivably have been Achæans; but that is another story.

But when we come to deal with the great invasion in the reign of Ramses III., about 1200 B.C., we get into touch with tribes which bear almost beyond question the marks of Cretan origin, and one of which is particularly interesting to us on other grounds. In the eighth year of Ramses III. the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean were swept by a great invasion of the 'Peoples of the Sea.' 'The isles were restless, disturbed among themselves,' says Ramses in his inscription at Medinet Habu. Very probably the incursion was the result of the southward movement of the invading northern tribes, whose pressure was forcing the ancient Ægean peoples to migrate and seek new homes for themselves. Landing in Northern Syria, the sea-peoples quickly made themselves masters of the fragments of the once formidable Hittite confederacy, and, absorbing in their alliance the Hittites, who may indeed have been of their own kin, they moved southwards along the sea-coast, their fleet of war-galleys keeping pace with the advance of the land



THEATRAL AREA, KNOSSOS: BEFORE RESTORATION (*p.* 100)

army. They established a central camp and place of arms in the land of Amor, or of the Amorites, and their southward movement speedily became a menace to the Egyptian Empire. Ramses III., the last great soldier of the true Egyptian stock, made effective preparations to meet them. Gathering at the Nile mouths a numerous fleet, which carried large numbers of the dreaded Egyptian archers, he advanced with the land army to meet the invaders, his fleet also accompanying the march of the army. The locality of the encounter between the two forces is doubtful, some placing it in Phœnicia, and others much nearer to the Egyptian frontier. In any case, a great battle was fought, both by land and sea, and the Egyptian army and fleet were entirely successful in the double encounter. The reliefs of Ramses at Medinet Habu show the details of the battle, the Egyptian fleet penetrating and overthrowing that of the sea-peoples, while the Pharaoh from the shore assists by archery in the discomfiture of his enemies. The result of the double victory was to put an effective check on any aspirations which the invaders may have cherished in the direction of a permanent occupation of Egypt, though quite probably they continued to hold the territory they had already gained.

The tribes which are mentioned in the inscriptions of Ramses as having been leagued together in this attempt are the Danauna, the Uashasha, the Zakkaru, the Shakalsha, and the Pulosathu, in alliance with the North Syrian tribes. The Dan-

auna are evidently the Danaoi, or Argives, the same race which, under Achæan overlords, composed the mass of the Greek army at the siege of Troy. As Danaos, the name-hero of the race, was King of Rhodes and Argos, these sea-Danaoi may have been Rhodian Argives. The Shakalsha are a more doubtful quantity, having been variously identified with the Sikels of ancient Sicily and with the Sagalassians of Pisidia. But the remaining tribes are in all probability Cretans, fragments of the old Minoan Empire which had collapsed two centuries before, and was now gradually becoming disintegrated under the continued pressure from the north. The Zakkaru have been connected by Professor Petrie with the coast-town of Zakro, in Eastern Crete, and the identification, though not absolutely certain, is at all events very probable. The Uashasha have been associated by Mr. H. R. Hall with the town of Axos, in Crete. There remain the Pulosathu, who are, almost beyond question, the Philistines, so well known to us from their connection with the rise of the Hebrew monarchy. The Hebrew tradition brought the Philistines from Kaphtor, and Kaphtor is plainly nothing else than the Egyptian Kefti, or Keftiu. In the Philistines, then, we have the last organized remnant of the old Minoan sea-power. Thrown back from the frontier of Egypt by the victory of Ramses III., they established themselves on the maritime plain of Palestine, where perhaps the Minoans had already occupied trading-settlements, and there formed a community consisting of

five cities, governed by five confederate tyrants. No doubt they brought under and held in subjection the ancient Canaanite population of the district, whom they would rule as the Normans ruled the inhabitants of Sicily. In the district which they governed, and especially at Tell-es-Safi (Gath), Messrs. Bliss and Macalister have discovered many specimens of pottery which is obviously Cretan of the Third Late Minoan period, together with ware which is local in the sense of having been manufactured on the spot, but is quite certainly Late Minoan also in its design and decoration.

So, then, the nation with which we have all been familiar from the earliest days of childhood as the hated rival of the young Hebrew state, whose wars with the Hebrews are the subject of so many of the heroic stories of Israel's Iron Age, was the last survival of the great race of Minos. Samson made sport for his Cretan captors in a Minoan Theatral Area by the portico of some degenerate House of Minos, half palace, half shrine, with Cretan ladies in their strangely modern garb of frills and flounces looking down from the balconies to see his feats of strength, as their ancestresses had looked down at Knossos on the boxing and bull-grappling of the palmy days when Knossos ruled the Ægean. The great champion whom David met and slew in the vale of Elah was a Cretan, a Pelasgian, one of the Greeks before the Greeks, wearing the bronze panoply with the feather-crested helmet which his people had adopted in their later days in place of

the old leathern cap and huge figure-eight shield. Ittai of Gath, David's faithful captain of the body-guard, and David's body-guards themselves, the Cherethites and Pelethites (Cretans and Philistines), were all of the same race.

Though these last supporters of the great Minoan tradition had fallen upon evil times, it is evident that they were not altogether degenerate. The references to their cities in Scripture show that they still retained the national taste for splendid buildings; and no doubt their culture, though belonging to the last and most debased period of Minoan art, was far in advance of that of the rude Hebrew tribes. The golden mice and tumours which they sent to the Hebrews along with the ark of Jehovah recall on the one hand the skill of the Minoan goldsmiths, and on the other the votive images of animals and diseased human organs placed in the old shrine at Petsofa. The respect which was excited by their warlike prowess can easily be read between the lines of the Hebrew story. A race that to its opponents appears to breed giants is a race that has proved itself thoroughly respectable on the field of war; and the fact that a small league of five towns maintained itself so long as it did, and was able to make itself so dreaded, points to bravery and skill in arms altogether out of proportion to its actual strength in mere numbers. Evidently the last Minoans succeeded in creating an atmosphere for themselves in Palestine, and in impressing the surrounding peoples with a wholesome terror of them. We may imagine

the men from Crete, lithe and agile, as we see them on the Boxer Vase of Hagia Triada, swaggering in their bronze armour among the weaker Orientals, much as the later Greek hoplite of the times of Psamtek I. or Haa-ab-ra domineered over the native Egyptians.

But all the same the Philistine was an anachronism, a survival from an older world. The day of the Minoan, like that of his early friend the Egyptian, had passed away. The stars of new races were rising above the horizon, and new claimants were dividing the heritage of the ancient world. To the new Greek the realm of knowledge and art which his Cretan forerunner had not unworthily cultivated; to the Mesopotamian the realm of armed dominance, to which also the Cretan had once laid claim; to the Hebrew the realm of spiritual thought, in which, by reason of our ignorance, we can say next to nothing of the Cretan's achievement, save only that he too sought for God, if haply he might feel after Him and find Him.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DESTROYERS

THE Empire of the Sea-Kings had not been immune from disaster and defeat any more than any other great Empire of the ancient world. The times of conquest and triumph, when Knossos exacted its human tribute from the vanquished states, Megara or Athens, or from its own far-spread dependencies, had occasionally been broken by periods when victory left its banners, and when the indignities it had inflicted on other states were retaliated on itself. Once at least in the long history of the palace at Knossos, if not twice, there had come a disastrous day when the Minoan fleet had either been defeated or eluded, when some invading force had landed and swept up the valley, had overcome what resistance could be made by the guard of the unfortified palace, and had ebbed back again to its ships, leaving death and fire-blackened walls behind it. The Second Middle Minoan period closes with the evidence of such a general catastrophe, in which the palace was sacked and fired, and there are also traces which suggest that

the end of the preceding period was marked by a similar disaster.

But these catastrophes, whether the agents of them were mere sea-rovers, making a daring raid upon the eyrie of the great sea-power, or the warriors of rival mainland states, eager to avenge upon their enemy what they themselves had suffered at her hands, or, as Dr. Evans and other explorers incline rather to believe, Cretans from Phæstos, whose purpose was merely to overthrow the ruling dynasty, scarcely interrupted the current of Minoan development. If the enemy came from without, he came only to destroy and plunder, not to occupy, and, having done his work, departed; if from within the Empire, his triumph made no breach in the continuity of the Minoan tradition. The palace rose again from its ashes, greater and more glorious than before, and men of the same stock carried on the work that had been checked for a while by the rough hand of war. The men of the Third Middle Minoan period reared the beginnings of the second palace on the site where the first had stood, and in the relics of their arts and crafts the same spirit which informed the earlier period still prevails, with no greater modifications than such as come naturally to the art of any nation by the mere lapse of time.

From the beginning of Middle Minoan III. to the end of Late Minoan II.—a period, that is to say, of either some 500 or almost 2,000 years, according to the scheme of Egyptian chronology which we may adopt—the civilization of Crete apparently followed

a course of even and peaceful development. At Knossos, Phæstos, and Hagia Triada the great palaces slowly grew to their final glory. The art that had produced the beautiful polychrome Kamares ware passed away, and was succeeded by the naturalism which has left us the Blue Boy who gathers the white crocuses, and the faïence reliefs of the Temple Repositories, a naturalism which, with various modifications in style and material, persists to the end of Late Minoan I.c In the midst of this period (Late Minoan I.) come what are perhaps the highest developments of Minoan art in the shape of the steatite vases of Hagia Triada, Boxer, Harvester, and Chieftain. On the mainland the kindred culture of Mycenæ was rising to its culmination, and the art represented in the Circle-Graves was almost in the fulness of its bloom. Naturalism declines in its turn, and is succeeded by the Later Palace style, more grandiose, more mannered, and less free than that which had preceded it. It was in the Later Palace period (Late Minoan II.) that the miniature frescoes were painted, to preserve for us the strangely modern style of the Minoan Court, with its flounced and furbelowed dames. Naturalism, though failing, was still capable of great things, and its last efforts in the palace at Knossos gave us the magnificent reliefs of painted stucco, such as the bull's head and the King with the peacock plumes. Over the seas, the Egyptians of the Eighteenth Dynasty were setting down on their tomb walls those likenesses of the Keftiu which have helped us



G. Maraghiannis

THEATRAL AREA, KNOSSOS: RESTORED (*p.* 100)

to the date of this last development of Minoan greatness.

Probably the power and grandeur of the Empire was never more imposing than during the hundred years before 1400 B.C. The House of Minos at Knossos had reached its full development, and stood in all its splendour, an imposing mass of building, crowning the hill of Kephala with its five storeys around the great Central Court, its Theatral Area, and its outlying dependencies. Within its spacious porticoes and corridors the walls glowed with the brilliant colours of innumerable frescoes and reliefs in coloured plaster. The Cup-Bearer, the Queen's Procession, the Miniature Frescoes of the Palace Sports, stood out in all their freshness. Magnificent urns in painted pottery, with reliefs like those of the great papyrus vase (Plate XXIII.), decorated the halls and courts, and were rivalled by huge stone amphoræ, exquisitely carved. The King and his courtiers were served in costly vessels of gold, silver, and bronze *repoussé* work. The Empire of the Sea-Kings was at its apogee, and on every hand there were the evidences of security and luxury.

But, as in the contemporary Egypt of Amenhotep III. a similar development in all the comforts and luxuries of civilized life was swiftly followed by the downfall under Akhenaten, so in Crete the luxury of Late Minoan II. was only the prelude to its great and final disaster. Exactly when the catastrophe came we cannot tell. The Cretan Empire was certainly still existent in all its glory in 1449

B.C., when Amenhotep II., the son of the great Tahutmes III., came to the throne, for Rekh-ma-ra, the Vizier of Tahutmes, in whose tomb the visit of the Keftian ambassadors is pictured, survived, as we know, into the reign of Amenhotep. The twenty-six years of Amenhotep II.'s reign, and the almost nine of Tahutmes IV., bring us to the accession of Amenhotep III. in 1414, and the thirty-six years of the latter take us to 1379 B.C. or thereby, when the heretic Akhenaten, whose reign was to witness the downfall of the Egyptian Empire in Syria, ascended the throne. Somewhere within these seventy years the Empire of the Minoans passed away in fire and bloodshed, and we shall probably not go far wrong if we suppose that the great catastrophe came about the year 1400 B.C. The conclusion of Dr. Evans is that 'it seems reasonable to suppose that the overthrow at Knossos had taken place not later than the first half of the fourteenth century.'* Mrs. H. B. Hawes places the fall of Knossos at 1450; but Rekh-ma-ra must have still been living at that date, and, as Professor Burrows remarks, 'it would at least be a strange coincidence if Egyptian artists were painting the glories of the Palace at the very moment when they were passing away.'

That there was a huge disaster, which broke for ever the power of the Sea-Kings, is unmistakable. The Minoan kingdom did not fall from over-ripeness and decay, as was the case with so many other empires. The latest relics of its art before the

* 'Scripta Minoa,' pp. 52, 53.

catastrophe show no signs of decadence; the latest specimens of its linear writing show a marked advance on those of preceding periods. A civilization in full strength and growth was suddenly and fatally arrested. Everywhere throughout the palace at Knossos there are traces of a vast conflagration. The charred ends of beams and pillars, the very preservation of the clay tablets with their enigmatic records, a preservation due, probably, to the tremendous heat to which they were exposed by the furious blazing of the oil in the store jars of the magazines, the traces of the blackening of fire upon the walls—everything tells of an overwhelming tragedy. Nor was the catastrophe the result of an accident. There is no mistaking the significance of the fact that in the palace scarcely a trace of precious metal, and next to no trace of bronze has been discovered. Fire at Knossos was accompanied by plunder, and the plundering was thorough. A few scraps of gold-leaf, and the little deposit of bronze vessels that had been preserved from the plunderers by the fact that the floor of the room in which they were found had sunk in the ruin of the conflagration, are evidences, better than absolute barrenness would have been, to the fact that the place was pillaged with minute thoroughness, and the unfinished stone jar in the sculptor's workshop tells its own tale of a sudden summons from peaceful and happy toil to the stern realities of warfare.

The evidence from Phæstos and Hagia Triada tallies with that from Knossos. Everywhere there

are the traces of fire on the walls, and a sudden interruption of quiet and luxurious life. The very stone lamps still stand in the rooms at Hagia Triada, and on the stairs of the Basilica at Knossos, as they stood to lighten the last night of the doomed Minoans. Of course there are no records, and if there were we could not read them ; but it is easy to imagine the disastrous sea-fight off the mouth of the Kairatos River, or elsewhere along the coast, the wrecks of the once invincible Minoan fleet driven ashore in hopeless ruin in the shallow bay, like the Athenian fleet at Syracuse, the swift march of the mainland conquerors up the valley, the brief, desperate resistance of the palace guards, and then the horrors of the sack, and the long column of flushed victors winding down to their ships, laden with booty, and driving with them crowds of captive women. Similar scenes must have been enacted at Phæstos and Hagia Triada, either by other forces of invaders, or by the same host sweeping round the island.

From this overwhelming disaster the Minoan Empire never recovered. The palace at Knossos was never reoccupied as a palace, at least on anything like the scale of its former magnificence. The invaders possibly departed as swiftly as they had come, or if, as seems more probable, they eventually established themselves as a ruling caste among the subject Minoans, they chose for their dwellings other sites than those of the old palaces. The broken fragments of the Minoan race crept back after the sack to the blackened ruins of their holy and beautiful house, not to rebuild it, but to divide its



GREAT JAR WITH PAPYRUS RELIEFS (*p.* 206)

stately rooms and those of its dependencies by rude walls into poor dwelling-houses, where they lived on —a very different life from that of the golden days before the sack.

In their own way they strove to continue, possibly under the modifying influence of the art tradition of their conquerors, the great story of the art of Knossos. There is no abrupt break in the style of the pottery and other articles belonging to the latest Minoan period, as compared with that of the days before the catastrophe. Technical skill is almost as great as ever; it is degeneration in the inspiration of the art that has begun. The spirit of the nation has been broken, and its art is no longer living. Though the old models are followed, it is with less complete understanding, with a perpetually increasing interval, and with less and less fidelity. 'With the inability to create new ideas of art and life,' says Dr. Mackenzie, 'is coupled the slavish adherence to inherited tradition and custom in both. Nothing new is produced, and nothing old is changed.'* 'For Crete the sack is Ægospotami, Late Minoan III., the long months that culminate in the surrender of Athens; the sack is Leipzig, Late Minoan III., the slow closing in on Paris that leads up to the abdication of Napoleon.'† Finally, even the technique fails, and the great art which gave to the world the figures of the Cup-Bearer and the King with the Peacock Plumes dies out in monstrosities.

* *Annual of the British School at Athens*, vol. xiii., p. 426.

† R. M. Burrows, 'The Discoveries in Crete,' p. 100.

The long decay was to some extent arrested by the coming of other waves of invaders, probably Achæans, to whose influence may be attributed the change in customs which begins to show itself in the post-Minoan period. Burning begins to take the place of inhumation as a means of disposing of the dead; Continental types of weapons make their appearance in the tombs; iron swords and daggers are even found. In life the men who use these weapons are clad, not with the Minoan loin-cloth, but with the garments which we associate with the Greeks of the Classical period, garments which require the use of the fibula or safety-pin to fasten them. The potter's art begins to find new motives, and to develop the use of the human form as a type of adornment in a manner almost entirely foreign to the Minoan tradition. At last, perhaps four centuries after the fall of Knossos, comes the great tidal wave of Dorian invasion, engulfing the work alike of conquerors and conquered, and blotting out all the landmarks of the ancient cultures.

And through all these changes, and ever since, the ruined House of Minos remained absolutely deserted, until, more than 3,000 years after the sack, its echoes were wakened by the spades and picks of Dr. Evans's workmen. Around the ruins grim and cruel legends swiftly grew up. The old traditions, dimly surviving in the minds of the native Cretans, of the bull-fight and the prize-ring, and the tribute of toreadors from the conquered nations, seemed to be corroborated by the very decorations of the

palace walls, still visible amidst the ruins, and around them were woven the stories which have come down to us as legends of early Greece. 'Let us place ourselves for a moment,' says Dr. Evans, 'in the position of the first Dorian colonists of Knossos after the great overthrow, when features now laboriously uncovered by the spade were still perceptible amid the mass of ruins. The name [Labyrinth] was still preserved, though the exact meaning, as supplied by the native Cretan dialect, had been probably lost. Hard by the western gate, in her royal robes, to-day but partially visible, stood Queen Ariadne herself—and might not the comely youth in front of her be the hero Theseus, about to receive the coil of thread for his errand of liberation down the mazy galleries beyond? Within, fresh and beautiful on the walls of the inmost chambers, were the captive boys and maidens locked up here by the tyrant of old. At more than one turn rose a mighty bull, in some cases, no doubt, according to the favourite Mycenæan motive, grappled with by a half-naked man. The type of the Minotaur itself as a man-bull was not wanting on the soil of prehistoric Knossos, and more than one gem found on this site represents a monster with the lower body of a man and the forepart of a bull.

'One may feel assured that the effect of these artistic creations on the rude Greek settler of those days was not less than that of the disinterred fresco on the Cretan workman of to-day. Everything around—the dark passages, the lifelike figures

surviving from an older world, would conspire to produce a sense of the supernatural. It was haunted ground, and then, as now, "phantasms" were about. The later stories of the grisly King and his man-eating bull sprang, as it were, from the soil, and the whole site called forth a superstitious awe. It was left severely alone by the new-comers. Another Knossos grew up on the lower slopes of the hill to the north, and the old Palace site became "a desolation and hissing." Gradually earth's mantle covered the ruined heaps, and by the time of the Romans the Labyrinth had become nothing more than a tradition and a name.'*

Who, then, were the invaders who, whether they remained as a ruling caste in the land which they had conquered, or merely destroyed and departed, inflicted upon the Minoan civilization a blow from which it never recovered? The Cretans of Præsos, whose story of the Sicilian expedition of Minos has already been mentioned, stated to Herodotus that, after that great disaster, 'to Crete, thus destitute of inhabitants . . . other men, and especially the Grecians, went, and settled there.' As Mr. Hogarth has pointed out, 'the men of Præsos were no doubt, in the true saga spirit, foreshortening history by crystallizing a process into a single event.' It is very improbable, in view of the evidence afforded by the long survival and gradual decay of the Minoan tradition, that there was any immediate general occupation of the island on the part of the conquering race. The

* *Monthly Review*, March, 1901, pp. 131, 132.

process which finally resulted in the island of Crete becoming 'the mixed land,' with a heterogeneous population of Pelasgians, Dorians, Achæans, and other tribes, must have been a gradual one, extending, in all probability, over several centuries. Any large influx of foreign elements was impossible so long as Crete was dominated by a great and warlike central power; but once that power was broken by the catastrophe in which the Palaces of Knossos and Phæstos were overthrown, there was nothing to hinder the gradual drifting in of the wandering tribes of the Ægean and of the North.

How that catastrophe came about we can see, not with any certainty of detail, but with some amount of probability as to its general outlines, from that echo of a period of wandering and strife in the Mediterranean area which comes to us from the records of Ramses III. at Medinet Habu. 'The isles were restless, disturbed among themselves,' and it was one of the later waves of that storm which broke itself against the armed strength of Egypt about 1200 B.C. Probably the process of migration had been going on for several generations. The rude but vigorous tribes of the North had been pressing down upon the races which had created that remarkable Bronze Age civilization of the Danubian area, whose relics have been coming to light of late years; and these in their turn, under the pressure from the North, had been moving down towards the Mediterranean, driving before them the peoples, probably of kindred stock to

themselves, who had occupied the lands of the Mycenæan civilization.

We know that long before the Homeric poems took shape the Achæans had established themselves as the ruling caste in the Argolid, in Laconia, and elsewhere; and that the pressure had begun even while Mycenæ was at the height of its power is suggested by the figures on one of the steles of the Circle-Graves, where a Mycenæan chieftain in his chariot is pursuing an enemy whose leaf-shaped sword shows that he was one of the Danubian race. The Mycenæan was the victor in the first shock; but the steady pressure of the tribes from the North was not to be permanently resisted, and the end was the establishment of an alien race in power at Mycenæ. The Mycenæan stele, where the chief of the ancient stock pursues his Northern assailant, has its *motif* reversed in the archaic Greek stele discovered by Dr. Pernier at Gortyna, where a big Northerner with round shield and greaves threatens a tiny Minoan or Mycenæan, crouching behind his figure-of-eight shield. The two rude pictures may be taken as typical of the beginning and the end of the process which resulted in the establishment of the race of Agamemnon at 'Golden Mycenæ.' Pressed upon thus by the warlike Achæans, perhaps already forced from their homes on the mainland, the Mycenæans of Tiryns and Mycenæ were obliged to fare forth in search of new dwelling-places. Not unnaturally the emigrants may have turned to the land from which their civilization had

originally sprung, in the expectation that the Cretans would not refuse a welcome and a home to men of their own stock. Seemingly they were disappointed in their expectation. The Minoans, or, at least, the Minoan rulers, were not prepared to admit peacefully the incursion of this new element into their kingdom; and the wanderers, under the spur of desperate need, took by force what was denied to them as suppliants. So, in all probability, the glory of the Minoan Empire was destroyed by the hands of its own children, the descendants of men whom Knossos herself had sent forth to hold her mainland colonies.*

In such circumstances there would be no sudden eclipse of the ancient culture. Modified slightly, if at all, by the influx of what, after all, was a kindred element, it would persist, as the evidence shows it persisted, until it perished of natural decay. Even when the Achæans, and, later still, the Dorians, followed in the wake of the Mycenæan immigrants, though their advent brought, as we have seen, important changes in customs and in art motives, the ancient native culture remained the fundamental element of the newer civilization. It has been pointed out by Mr. Hogarth that the Geometric vases of the early Iron Age in Crete exhibit in their decoration merely stylized Minoan motives, while 'the shields and other bronzes of the Idæan Cave, the latest of which come down probably to

* *Cf.* Dr. Mackenzie, *Annual of the British School at Athens*, vol. xiii., pp. 424, 425.

the ninth or even the eighth century, are artistic descendants of Minoan masterpieces modified by some element of uncouthness which was probably of Northern origin.'*

Thus in slow decay, after the great catastrophe, passed away the great civilization of the Minoan Empire. Not all of the tribes which had owned the dominion of the House of Minos were content, however, to remain as subjects to the mainland conquerors. The destruction of the central power at Knossos must have involved, as Dr. Evans has suggested,† the collapse of much of the commerce on which the island of the Hundred Cities depended for the support of its great population. Already in the reign of Amenhotep III. of Egypt, that powerful monarch had been obliged to establish a special coastguard service at the mouths of the Nile to protect his trade-routes against the Lycian pirates. When the Minoan fleet was no longer in being to police the Ægean, these and other piratical races must have quickly driven the Cretan merchant marine from the seas. The purple fisheries and the oil trade would dwindle and die, and the population which had been supported by them would be driven from a land which could no longer maintain it. The colonizing movement which has left traces of Minoan culture in Anatolia, in Palestine, in Sicily, and even in Spain, began, no doubt, at an earlier period, when the Empire of the Sea-Kings was in its full strength;

* *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1908, p. 602.

† 'Scripta Minoa,' p. 59.

but it probably received a considerable impulse at this time of forced emigration. The sudden introduction of the same culture into Cyprus at some period after 1400 B.C. has been referred to conquest by men of the Ægean race, who may very well have been the men of Knossos driven forth by the pressure of altered conditions to find a new home for themselves.

The Mycenæan pottery found at Tell-el-Amarna shows that there was still an opening in Egypt for the products of Ægean art at least as late as the reign of Akhenaten; and it is more than probable that in Egypt many of the *émigrés* of the Minoan *débâcle* found a home. The art of the reign of Akhenaten is characterized by the somewhat sudden outburst of a naturalistic style almost entirely foreign to the Egyptian tradition; and, as Mr. Hall foresaw nine years ago, it has been suggested* that the naturalism of Tell-el-Amarna owes some of its inspiration to the influence of the fugitives who brought with them from Crete the traditions of the great art of Knossos. Such a suggestion is no longer so improbable as it seemed to be in 1901, when it was still a tenable theory that the new development of Egyptian art was due to Mesopotamian influence, and came from Mitanni with Queen Tyi, the wife of Amenhotep III. Now that it is certain that Tyi was no Mitannian, but a native Egyptian, that door is closed, and we must suppose either that Egyptian art suddenly and spontaneously

* R. M. Burrows, 'The Discoveries in Crete,' p. 96.

awakened to a new style of vision and execution, from which, again, it as suddenly departed, or else that some foreign influence was working strongly upon the rigid Egyptian convention, modifying and vivifying it. If a foreign influence, why not the influence of the Minoan *émigrés*, whose art we at least know to have been capable of such an effect? Of course, it is, after all, matter of surmise, and perhaps the chances are rather in favour of the new art of Akhenaten's time having been a genuinely native growth, influenced and inspired by the new ideas with which the heretic King was seeking to leaven the national life; but it is certainly far from unlikely that the break-up of the Minoan Empire did influence the art of Egypt, and perhaps that of other nations, in a manner something similar to, though on a smaller scale than, that in which the capture of Constantinople influenced the culture of Europe in the fifteenth century.

We have already seen the evidence for the migration of Minoan tribes of a later age in the assault of the Zakkaru and Pulosathu upon Egypt 200 years after the fall of Knossos, and the establishment of the latter tribe as an independent power upon the coast of Palestine—events which may have been due to the advance of another wave of Northern colonists upon the shores of Crete. One more glimpse of the dying sea-power of the Cretan race, now itself disorganized and predatory, is given us by the Golenischeff papyrus, which tells, among other adventures of the unfortunate Wen-Amon, envoy of Her-hor,

the priest-King of Upper Egypt (*circa* 1100 B.C.), how the Egyptian ambassador was threatened with capture by eleven ships of Zakru pirates, who put into Byblos when he was about to sail thence. Whether these were genuine Minoans or not, it is impossible to tell; their immediate connection was apparently with Dor, on the coast of Palestine; but their name suggests the town of Zakro, in Eastern Crete, and it is not unlikely that they belonged to the same race as the Zakkaru of the time of Ramses III.

Thereafter the Egyptian records are silent as to the scattered tribes of Crete, just as they had been silent since the rise of the Nineteenth Dynasty as to the organized Empire of the Keftians. The eleven shiploads of Zakru sea-robbers are the last degenerate representatives of the great marine which, under the Kings of the House of Minos, had once held the undisputed Empire of the Ægean. The ring of Minos was destined to lie for long ages beneath the waves before the descendants of Theseus brought it up again.

CHAPTER IX

THE PERIODS OF MINOAN CULTURE

We must now endeavour to form some idea of the various periods into which the long enduring culture of the Minoan Empire more or less naturally falls, and to note some of the characteristic features of each period. The chief aid in the formation of such an idea is given by the remains of the pottery which have survived from each period, and it is largely from the classification of the pottery at Knossos and other sites that the scheme adopted by Dr. Evans and other workers has been derived. The deposit left by Neolithic man on the hill of Kephala averages about 6 metres in thickness below the later deposit which marks the occupation of the site by the post-Neolithic culture. We are thus led to an almost fabulous antiquity for the first occupation of the site. In the earliest beginnings of human development, progress, with its consequent accumulation, is slow, and if we allow a rate of 3 feet of deposit for each thousand years, we shall probably not be very far wrong. Such an allowance brings us to about 10,000 B.C. as the time

when Neolithic man began his first settlement on the hill of Knossos.

Neolithic Age.—The remains found in the deposit of this period are naturally of a very simple and primitive character. They consist of pottery, hand-made without any use of the wheel, and hand-burnished, black in colour, and, in the latest specimens, adorned with incised ornament, which is sometimes filled in with a white chalky substance. While this description is characteristic of the deposit generally, a gradual progress in the potter's art is traceable from the virgin soil upwards. In the earliest stratum, immediately above the depositless virgin soil, the pottery, for the depth of the first metre, was entirely plain, unfired, polished within and without, with no appearance of narrowed necks or moulded bases. The next metre shows the beginning of incised ornament, but in almost inappreciable quantity, and the third and fourth metres show the gradual, but extremely slow, growth of this species of decoration, the proportion of incised vases in the fourth metre only reaching 3 per cent. The fifth metre deposit, however, discloses one important innovation. The proportion of incised vases is scarcely greater than in the preceding stratum, but almost all of them have the incisions filled in with the white chalky substance already alluded to, forming a geometric design of white upon black. Along with this new development of the incised ware goes a development of the unincised, whose surface is now not only polished to the highest

degree of lustre, but is thereafter rippled in vertical lines by the pressure of some blunt instrument, so as to produce an undulating effect, like that of the ripple marks on sand. The rippling of the unincised pottery continues along with the chalk filling of the incised through the remainder of the Neolithic series, and, in fact, appears to have enjoyed an even superior popularity. In the sixth metre from the virgin soil indications begin to present themselves of the fact that the Neolithic period is about to draw to a close, for some of the pottery is beginning to assume the shapes which are characteristic of the painted ware of the earliest Minoan period, and in the following metre paint begins to make its appearance as a means of decoration in rivalry with the incision and rippling of the earlier strata. From this point, then, we begin to get into touch with the genuine Minoan periods, of which, according to Dr. Evans's classification, there are three—Early, Middle, and Late Minoan—each in its turn subdivided into three sub-periods.

Early Minoan I.—The pottery of this period takes over in great part the style of the primitive hand-burnished black ware inherited from the preceding age. But though this supplies the greater proportion of the material, it is not the characteristic feature. This is supplied by the fact that the potter now begins to use paint as a means for producing the lustrous black surface which his Neolithic predecessor produced by hand-burnishing. A lustrous black glaze medium is spread as a slip over the

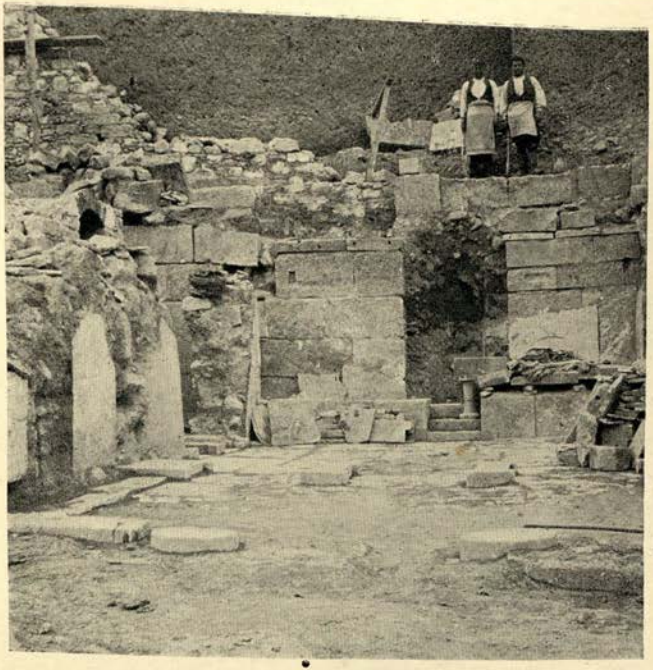
surface of the clay, so as to produce an effect generally similar to that of the hand-polished ware, and on this lustrous slip the decoration is painted, generally in white, more rarely in vermilion. Thus we have painted vases, with light design upon a dark ground.

Having made this step, the artist varied his procedure by applying the black slip itself as the decoration in bands upon the natural buff colour of the clay, thus giving a decorative scheme of dark design upon a light ground. The ware now for the first time gives evidence of having been fired. The primitive 'bucchero,' still surviving alongside of the painted pottery, is very closely related to the imported vases found by Petrie in First Dynasty tombs at Abydos; and a further link with Egypt is afforded by the fact that vases of Proto-Dynastic Egyptian form in diorite and syenite were discovered in the south and east quarters of the palace at Knossos. Early Minoan I. is thus to be equated with the earliest beginnings of Dynastic rule in Egypt—that is to say, it dates from about 5500 B.C. if Petrie's date for the First Dynasty be adopted, or from about 3400 B.C. if the Berlin dating be preferred. From this period there survive no remains of building at Knossos.

Early Minoan II.—The distinguishing characteristic of the second period of Early Minoan is the greater freedom and originality shown in the designs of the vases. The style of painted decoration remains much the same as in the preceding period;

but the vases now develop long spouts or beaks, and are the 'beak-jugs' (Schnabelkanne) of the German archæologists. While a tendency may be observed to vary the straight line decoration of Early Minoan I. by the introduction of simple curves, there is also a revival of the fashion for the old incised geometric-patterned ware. A curious development of this period is found in the mottled ware from Vasiliki, where the decoration was accomplished neither by incising nor by painting a design, but by a method of firing in which the vases, first painted red, were so placed that the hot coals actually came into contact with the vases at certain points, and produced black patches upon the red paint. The resultant mottled surface was then hand-polished, and sometimes, but more rarely, used as the medium for a design in white. To this period belong the oldest parts of the deposit at Hagios Onouphrios, and the greater part of the contents of the bee-hive chamber tomb at Hagia Triada, where, along with incised and early painted vases, were found copper daggers with very short triangular blades, a number of rude stone seals, and very primitive idols, rudely imitating the human form. There are still no traces of any surviving building on the hill of Knossos, nor is there any definite link with Egypt to afford an opportunity for determining the date of the period.

Early Minoan III.—In this period the proportion of painted vases steadily increases, though for a time there is also a revival of the incised orna-



THE BASILICA



STONE LAMP

THE ROYAL VILLA, KNOSSOS (*p.* 108)

ment, attributed by Dr. Evans to influence from the Cyclades, which at this time also gave to Crete the idea of the flat, banjo-shaped human figurines which are characteristic of the early deposits of Melos and Amorgos.

The use of the potter's wheel probably now begins, and the clay is carefully sifted and fired, the favourite colour scheme being white on lustrous brown or black slip, though sometimes the alternative scheme of dark upon light is adopted; and vases are sometimes fashioned out of very thin clay, in anticipation of the fine egg-shell Kamares ware of Middle Minoan II. The chief decorative motive is a horizontal band, or more than one, around the upper part of the vase. On these bands the chief ornament is the zig-zag, and curves directly derived therefrom, and the spiral begins to appear as a form of decoration. It is uncertain whether the credit for the origination of this favourite form of decorative motive is to be attributed to Egypt or to Crete. Miss Hall* regards the Early Minoan III. spirals as late-comers in the field, attributing the first development of the spiral to the painters of Egyptian pre-Dynastic vases; but Mr. H. R. Hall† denies the right of the volutes on the pre-Dynastic vases to be regarded as spirals at all, considers that the true spiral appears suddenly in Egypt as 'a new and unprecedented thing' about the beginning of

* 'The Decorative Art of Crete in the Bronze Age,' p. 9.

† Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology, vol. xxxi., part 5, pp. 221, 222.

the Middle Kingdom, and infers that in its use the Cretans were original, and the Egyptians merely borrowers; while Dr. Evans* denies originality to both, and holds that the use of the spiral was first developed on the European side of the Ægean.

The fact that the seals of this period show motives derived from the Egyptian Sixth Dynasty 'button-seals' suggests that Early Minoan III. is to be equated with the end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt. This, however, is but a slight help as to the positive date of the Minoan period, owing to the huge gap between the different systems of Egyptian chronology. All that can be said is that on Petrie's system of dating the Minoan period which is contemporary with the end of the Sixth Dynasty would date about 4000 B.C., and on the Berlin system about 2475 B.C. Though the two cultures are contemporaneous, it is, of course, by no means to be inferred that the art of Early Minoan III. has left us any relics which are worthy of being placed on a level with the wonderful work of the Egyptian Old Kingdom artists. The primitive pictographs on the bead-seals of this period mark the beginnings of this form of Minoan script, which persisted until Late Minoan I., when it was at last superseded by the linear form of writing which had made its appearance in Middle Minoan III.

Middle Minoan I.—With this period we have distinct advance in more directions than one. The Minoan artist is beginning to feel his way towards

* 'Scripta Minoa,' p. 126.

that polychrome style of decoration which reached such a remarkable development in the Kamares vases of the succeeding stage. In the decoration of his ware, which does not exhibit any marked advance in form upon that of Early Minoan III., he has begun to supplement the familiar white on the dark slip by adding yellow, orange, red, and crimson. The Petsofa figurines, already alluded to, which belong to this period, have a colour scheme of black and white, red and orange. Along with this development of the use of colour goes a corresponding advance in design. The motives of the former period are continued, but are much more developed, and more freely handled. Instead of being stiffly disposed in bands round the vessel, they are now frequently grouped with the idea of covering the ground of the vases in a graceful manner without any attempt at formal definition of the limits of each article of the design, the artist's idea being simply to fill, in a manner satisfying to the eye, the space upon which he had to work. The zonal system still persists side by side with the freer style, and is often very skilfully handled as a means of decoration. One of the characteristic features of Middle Minoan ceramic art—the use of relief to enhance the effect of the polychrome decoration through the addition of contrasts of light and shade—is seen coming into use in the earliest part of the period.

Decoration is still geometric, and was to continue so for long. Not until Middle Minoan III. do we

get a really naturalistic style of decorative art. But in Middle Minoan I. there are indications which, though slight, seem to point to a striving after realism on the part of some of the artists of the period. This tendency is apparent even in some of the geometric designs, which are so disposed as to form an approach to naturalistic patterns. But the most remarkable example of the tendency is seen in a fragment of a vase from Knossos, figured by Dr. Mackenzie,* on which the figures of three of the Cretan wild goats are followed by that of a gigantic beetle with a tail. 'The subject of the design,' says Dr. Mackenzie, 'in its naturalistic character is so advanced that, were it not for the company in which the fragments occur, we should be tempted to assign it to a much later age.' It is unfortunate that only a part of the design has survived, and that no parallel to it has ever been found. Was it merely a sport, the freak of some ancient potter who was weary of the conventional designs of his time, and tried his hand at something new, combining the wild life that he could see from the window of his workshop with that which crawled upon its floor, without ever dreaming of the problem he was setting for the students of 4,000 years later to exercise themselves upon? The style of the goat and beetle fragment is dark upon light. The goats are surrounded by an incised outline, and filled in with lustrous black glaze; the beetle is drawn freely in the black glaze, without incision,

* *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. xxvi., part 1, plate ix. 3.





(1) KNOSSOS VALLEY
(2) EXCAVATING AT KNOSSOS

almost as though it had been a humorous afterthought of the potter.

Middle Minoan I. has no surviving link with Egyptian art, a fact which may be explained by the consideration that from the end of the Sixth Dynasty to the establishment of the Eleventh, Egypt appears to have been passing through a time of great confusion. The period is practically a Dark Age so far as Egyptian history is concerned.

Middle Minoan II.—We now come to the period when the first undoubted traces of the Cretan palaces begin to reveal themselves. The chief architectural remains of the period are, however, not at Knossos, but at Phæstos. There the Theatral Area, at least, was in existence early in this period, possibly in the later part of the preceding one. But at Knossos the chief evidence for the high state of civilization attained in this period is the pottery, which reaches a very advanced development. This is the age of the splendid polychrome vessels of the type called 'Kamares,' from the cave on Mount Ida where they were first discovered by Mr. J. L. Myres. The vases and cups of this fabric, from the delicacy of their forms, the grace of their designs, and the richness of their colour, are among the most notable survivals of Minoan ceramic art. The clay is fine and carefully sifted, and the walls of the vessels are of extreme thinness and delicacy, approaching to that of the finest egg-shell china. The designs upon the vases

are often moulded in low relief as well as painted, and the thinness of their walls, the form of their handles, and the knobs upon them, which are evidently meant to suggest rivets, show that the potters of the time were endeavouring to emulate the achievements of their brother artists, the metal workers. The designs upon the vases themselves are conventional, the idea being to produce a rich and harmonious effect of form and colour rather than to secure any imitation of Nature. Indeed, the patterns are very largely geometric; the zig-zag, the cross, and concentric circles occur frequently; and when plant life is imitated it is skilfully conventionalized, as in the case of the water-lily cup, perhaps the most beautiful specimen of the ware of the period, on which the white petals start from a centre at the foot of the cup and enfold its body. The ground of this cup is lustrous black, and the white of the petals is accentuated by thin lines of red, while a geometric pattern moulded in low relief runs round the rim of the cup above the water-lilies (Plate XXIX. 4). The colours of the vases are varied, consisting chiefly of white, orange, crimson, red, and yellow, and each colour is used in several shades. 'Black shades into purple, white into cream; brown has sometimes a red, and sometimes an olive tint; yellows are either pale or orange; and red is not only a crude vermilion, but is weakened to pink, or strengthened with shades of orange and cherry and terra-cotta.' In the decoration of the vases both styles flourish side by

side, dark design upon light ground, and light upon dark. In some vessels of the period there is a combination of conventionalized naturalistic ornament and geometric design.

A distinct link between Egypt and Middle Minoan II. is afforded by the fact that at Kahun, close to the pyramid of Senusert II., near the Fayum, Professor Petrie discovered vases which are unquestionably of Kamares type, while the synchronism with the Twelfth Dynasty was fully established by Professor Garstang's discovery at Abydos of fragments of a polychrome vessel of late Middle Minoan II. type in an untouched tomb, which also contained glazed steatite cylinders with the names of Senusert III. and Amenemhat III. Middle Minoan II., then, equates with the times of the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty, a period which was in many respects the most brilliant of Egyptian history.

When we come to inquire, however, as to positive date, we are still met, though almost for the last time, by the great discrepancy between the systems of Egyptian dating. The Twelfth Dynasty is placed by Professor Petrie at about 3400 B.C., by the traditional dating about 2500 B.C., while the modern German school brings down the date as low as 2000 B.C. No more can be said than that Middle Minoan II. certainly does not begin earlier than 3400 B.C., and can scarcely begin later than 2000 B.C. The period closes with the evidence of a great catastrophe at Knossos, in which the palace

was burned; and, as already mentioned, the fact that Phæstos shows no evidence of such a disaster at this point has roused the suspicion that the Lords of Phæstos may have been responsible for the destruction of the greater palace.

Middle Minoan III.—To this period belong the beginnings of the second palace at Knossos. The western portion of the palace probably dates largely from this time, though it was altered and extended later; and we must place here the Temple Repositories, and certain other chambers on the north-east side of the Central Court, though they were covered up and built over in Late Minoan I. At all events, a very great and splendid building must have existed upon the site at this time. Egypt was passing through the dark period between the Thirteenth and Seventeenth Dynasties, which includes the domination of the Hyksos; but the civilization of Crete, on the contrary, was continually and steadily advancing. To this age belong many of the most interesting and precious relics of the Minoan culture.

The art of the period gradually undergoes a great change from that of Middle Minoan II. Polychrome decoration steadily declines, and is superseded by monochrome. The beautiful lustrous black glaze ground of the vases is replaced by a dull purple slip on which the decoration is often laid in a powdery white paint. The best designs are found in this white upon a lilac or mauve ground. In the designs themselves conventionalism and geometric ornament

pass away, and are followed by a development of naturalism. Dr. Mackenzie has pointed out that it is to this growth of naturalism that we must trace the gradual disappearance of polychrome decoration. 'Once we have the portrayal of natural objects, such as flowers, which becomes so rife before the close of the Middle Minoan Age, it soon becomes apparent that a scale of colours, which in their relation to each other were capable of producing polychrome effects of great beauty, was quite inadequate towards the reproduction of the natural colours of objects. Thus green, for example, which is the first necessity towards the rendering of leaves and stems, did not exist in the colour repertory of the vase painter. The ceramic artist must thus have felt that with his limited scale of colours he could not produce the same natural effects as the wall-painter with his. On the other hand, he must have been equally conscious that natural objects such as flowers did not look natural in a polychrome guise which was not that of Nature. The only solution of the colour difficulty in the circumstances was a compromise in the shape of a convention. Thus the tendency came into being to make all natural objects either simply light on a dark ground, or dark on a light ground.'*

The two flowers most generally used for the purpose of ornamentation are the lily and the crocus. For the first time the importance of pottery as an evidence of the condition of the art of the period

* *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. xxvi., part 1, pp. 257, 258.

is second to that of other artistic products. It is to Middle Minoan III. that there belongs the wonderful fabric of faïence, of which so many specimens were discovered in the Temple Repositories. In them the same tendency towards naturalism reveals itself. The wild-goat suckling its kid, the flying-fish, the porcelain vases, one of them with cockle-shell relief, and another with ferns and rose-leaves on a ground of pale green, are all instances of the naturalistic growth. Evidence is also afforded of a great delight in scenes connected with the sea, and we have the flying-fish and the seal with the seaman in his skiff defending himself against the attacks of the sea-monster, to witness to the Minoan appreciation alike of the curiosities and the dangers of the deep.

Fresco-painting also begins to leave survivals, and we have particularly the fresco of the Blue Boy gathering white crocuses. At the beginning of the period the old form of pictographic writing is still in general use, but by the close of Middle Minoan III. the earlier type of the linear script, Class A, has made its appearance and is extensively used. The Middle Minoans of the Third period were the fabricators of the huge knobbed and corded *pithoi*, or jars, some of them with the curious 'trickle,' ornament, which is surely decoration reduced to its last straits. The artist merely dabbed quantities of brown glaze paint around the rims of his jars, and allowed it to trickle down the sides at its own will. The result is curious, but can scarcely be

called beautiful (Plate IX. 2). 'Ab-nub's child, Sebek-user, deceased,' whose statuette was found at Knossos, gives us a point of connection between the earlier part of Middle Minoan III. and the Thirteenth Egyptian Dynasty, while the alabastron of Khyan links the later portion of the period with the Hyksos domination in Egypt. The King who built the great tomb at Isopata, already described, must have reigned at Knossos during this period.

Late Minoan I.—In this period we come into touch with a great deal of the fine work of the Royal Villa at Hagia Triada, which has been already described. A considerable portion of the area of the palace at Knossos, dating from the preceding age, is now covered up by new construction, and the second palace begins to assume the form which was completed in the subsequent period. In pottery the naturalistic style still persists, but the technique begins to modify, and the white design on a dark ground occurs less frequently than design in dark glaze paint on the natural light ground of the clay. Ornament begins to partake increasingly of a marine character; the octopus, the Triton shell, the nautilus, and seaweed, appear as designs, and are executed in lifelike fashion, which contrasts strongly with the later conventionalized method of representing them. Indeed, Middle Minoan III. and Late Minoan I. and II. show a distinct appreciation of and delight in all the beauty and wonder of the sea, which suggest the important part which it played in the lives of the Cretan populace. 'At

ports where sailors and fishermen and divers for sponge and purple went and came, it was natural for an imaginative race to acquire that sense of the magic and mystery of the sea, that curiosity about the life in its depths, which found expression in these ceramic pictures.'*

Along with the marine designs went naturalistic representations of flowers and grasses—the lily and the crocus, already familiar from earlier work, the Egyptian lotus in a form adapted to the taste of the Minoan artist, and ivy leaves and tendrils. A peculiarly graceful design on a vase from Zakro shows an adaptation of the Egyptian lotus, presenting that favourite Nilotic motive in a style more flexible and easy than that of the native representations of it. The design in this case is painted in white on a reddish-brown ground, and its peculiarity is that the white was laid on after the vase had been fired, and can be removed with the finger (Plate XXIX. 2). The three vases from Hagia Triada, the Boxer, the Harvester, and the Chieftain, belong to this period, as do also the frescoes of the Hunting Cat and the Climbing Plants, and probably the Royal Gaming Board from the palace at Knossos. At this time, too, we come upon the long bronze swords which had succeeded the daggers of the preceding ages. Hieroglyphic writing is now superseded by the linear script of Class A, which now comes into regular use, although at Knossos

* R. C. Bosanquet, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. xxiv., part 2, p. 322.



G. Maraghiannis

GREAT STAIRCASE, PHÆSTOS (*p.* 120)

the documents in this script, according to Dr. Evans, are only to be found in the stratum belonging to the last period of Middle Minoan, their place being supplied by Class B, which occurs only at Knossos.

At Hagia Triada and Gournia the older forms of vase are mingled with early specimens of the type variously known as 'Bügelkanne,' 'Vases à Étrier,' or 'Stirrup-vases.' These vases, named from the stirrup-like appearance of their curving handles, may more correctly be called 'false-necked vases,' from the fact that the neck to which the handles unite is closed, and another neck is formed, farther away from the handles, for convenience in pouring. The false-necked vase is the characteristic pottery type of Late Minoan III., and occurs very frequently on the Mycenæan sites of that period. The seals with fantastic forms of monsters, such as those found in such numbers at Zakro, date from the beginning of Late Minoan I., and to this period also belong the earlier of the Shaft-or Circle-Graves at Mycenæ, so that now for the first time Minoan can be equated with Mycenæan. We are still without any system of dating that is absolutely certain, but this is the last period of which such a remark is true. The next period brings us into touch with Egyptian synchronisms whose date is certain to within a few years.

Late Minoan II.—To Late Minoan II. belong the great glories of the second palace at Knossos, which arrived at its greatest splendour just before the time at which it was to be destroyed. Now

were built the Throne Room and its antechamber, and the Royal Villa with its daïs and throne and columned hall, while the walls of the completed palace were covered with the splendid frescoes of whose beauties the Cup-Bearer and the spectators watching the games give us evidence. The reliefs in hard plaster, such as the bull's head and the King with the peacock plumes, show the style of decoration which gave variety on the walls to the paintings on the flat. In pottery the change of style and decoration is gradual, but quite pronounced. The chief characteristic of the time is the fabrication of large decorated vases and *pithoi*, such as the beautiful papyrus relief vase of the Royal Villa, nearly 4 feet in height (Plate XXIII.; see also Plate XXX.). Naturalism still survives in occasional designs, but the bulk of the design is conventional, and the composition of the various elements is often extremely skilful. A typical form of vessel of this period is the long narrow strainer, which is borne by the Cup-Bearer in the palace fresco, and of which various specimens have been found. In many cases these strainers were made of variegated marble, though pottery was also used for them.

The bronze vessels from the north-west house at Knossos, and the swords from the earlier Zafer Papoura graves, testify to the skill with which metal was wrought. One of these swords from the chieftain's grave, the short weapon which the noble of Late Minoan II. carried along with his long rapier, perhaps for parrying thrusts, as the gallants

of Queen Elizabeth's time used their daggers, has a pommel of translucent agate, and a gold-plated hilt engraved with a design of a lion chasing and capturing a wild-goat. Great bronze vessels were wrought with splendid conventional designs, and some of the stone vases of the period are amazing in the skill with which they were worked and decorated. 'How the hard material was worked with precision in the *inside* of vessels which have only the narrowest of neck orifices, and that in an age of soft bronze tools, is as great a mystery as the mode of working diorite and granite in prehistoric Egypt.'* Perhaps the most splendid specimen is the great amphora, 2 feet high by 6 feet in circumference, with its two magnificent spiral bands, which was found in the so-called Sculptor's Workshop at Knossos, beside the smaller vessel which had only been roughed out when the catastrophe of the palace came.

The linear script, Class B, now supersedes the earlier type, Class A.

In this period we come for the first time into a sphere where there is practically an absolute certainty in dating; for now we have the Keftiu appearing in the tomb frescoes of the Eighteenth Dynasty at Thebes, with their vessels of characteristic Minoan type, and their purely Minoan style of dress and general appearance. Sen-mut's tomb gives us a date about 1480 B.C., and Rekh-ma-ra's may bring us down to 1450 B.C., or thereby. It is

* D. G. Hogarth, *Cornhill Magazine*, March, 1903, p. 329.

somewhat striking that the periods of greatest splendour alike for the Egyptian Empire and for the Minoan should virtually coincide. In either case, the duration of the culmination of splendour was short. The magnificence of the Egypt of Hatshepsut, Tahutmes III., and Amenhotep III., was speedily to be clouded and dimmed by the disasters of the reign of Akhenaten ; but even before the glory of the Eighteenth Dynasty had passed away, the sun of the Minoan Empire had set. Late Minoan II., with all its triumphs of architecture and art, was brought to an abrupt close by the sack of the palaces, probably about 1400 B.C., and the great frescoes of the palace at Knossos were the last evidences of a magnificence which was never to be revived again on Cretan soil.

During this period intercourse between Crete and Egypt must have been frequent and close. It is not only indicated by the evidence of the Sen-mut and Rekh-ma-ra tombs, but by the parallelism in the styles of art in the two countries. The art of each remains truly national, but the frescoes of Knossos and Hagia Triada and those of the Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt are inspired by the same spirit, though in either case the result is modified by national characteristics.

Late Minoan III.—This, the last period of the Minoan civilization, commences with the destruction of the palace of Knossos, somewhere before 1400 B.C., and presents no definite line of termination. The great style of art represented by the



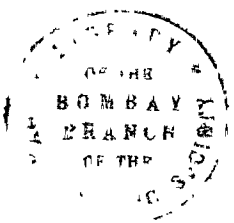
G. Maraghiannis

THE HARVESTER VASE, HAGIA TRIADA (*p.* 124)

preceding period does not at once degenerate into barbarism. If, as seems probable, the men who destroyed the Cretan palaces were Mycenæans of the mainland, more or less of the same stock as the Cretan representatives of the Minoan tradition, we can see how the catastrophe of the palaces need not have been followed by any immediate catastrophe of the art of Crete. At the same time the true spirit of the Minoan race had been destroyed, and degeneration of the standard of art naturally followed. The level of artistic work in the earlier part of the period is still high—in fact, it is that of what is considered the best Mycenæan art—the technical skill which produced the masterpieces of the Palace period still survives, but the inspiration which gave it life is gone. Originality in design vanishes first, and is gradually followed by skill in execution; the old types are reproduced in more and more slovenly fashion, and at last even the material employed follows the example of degeneration. This period of gradual decadence is, however, the period of greatest diffusion of the products of Minoan, or, rather, as we may now call it, of Mycenæan art. At Ialysos in Rhodes, and in the lower town of Mycenæ, types parallel with the work of Crete are found, and Tell-el-Amarna furnishes specimens of pottery whose degeneracy from the type of the Palace period declares them to belong to these days of decadence. Specimens of Late Minoan III. work are found at Tarentum, and the island of Torcello, near Venice, and even as far

west as Spain. One of the characteristic features of the period is the fact that the stirrup-vase, found at Hagia Triada and Gournia in Late Minoan I., but almost totally wanting in Late Minoan II., now becomes common.

Towards the close of the period the site of the palace at Knossos was partially reoccupied by a humbler race of men, who used the rooms that had once witnessed the pride of the Minoan Sovereigns, dividing them up by flimsy partition-walls to suit their smaller needs. An age of transition succeeded, during which the character of the Cretan population was gradually modified by successive waves of invasion from the mainland, until Crete assumed the guise of 'the mixed land,' under which Homer knew it; and finally came the great invasion of the Dorians, which brought in for Crete, as for the rest of Greece, the dark age which preceded the dawn of the true Hellenic culture.


BOMBAY

CHAPTER X

LIFE UNDER THE SEA-KINGS

WHAT manner of men were the people who developed the Bronze Age civilization of Crete? Can we form any idea of their physical characteristics, of their homes and social conditions, of the general aspect of their daily life, and of the occupations in which they were engaged? Such questions can only be answered more or less generally in the absence of written material, or, rather, in our lack of understanding of the written material that exists; but, still, a considerable mass of evidence is in existence from which some broad outlines may be deduced with moderate certainty, and the object of this chapter is to present these outlines.

First, as to the physical characteristics of the race. Two lines of evidence are here available. On the one hand, there is that afforded by the actual remains of the bodies of men and women of the Minoan race which have been exhumed from ossuaries of the Bronze Age, and studied by anthropologists. Generally speaking, the result of their

investigations has been to show that the Minoans belonged to the southernmost of the three great racial belts into which the ancient peoples of Europe may be divided—the so-called Mediterranean race. That is to say, they were a people of the long-headed type, dark in colouring and small in stature. The average height, estimated from the bones which have been measured, is somewhat under 5 feet 4 inches, which is about 2 inches less than the average of the modern Cretans, and corresponds more to the stature of the Sardinians and Sicilians of the present time. A few skulls of the broad-headed type appear among the general long-headedness, and probably point to some intermixture of race; but, as a whole, the people were long-headed. The shortness of stature indicated by the bones is a feature which one would scarcely have inferred from the other line of evidence available—the actual representations of men and women of their own race which the Minoans have left in their fresco-paintings; but allowance must, of course, be made for the artistic convention which tended to accentuate slenderness of figure, and therefore to increase apparent height.

Judging from the surviving pictures, the Minoan men were bronzed, with dark hair and beardless faces; their figures were slender, and their slenderness was made all the more conspicuous by the fashion which prevailed of drawing in the waist by a tightly fastened belt, which seems, in some cases at least, to have had metal edges; but muscularly

they were well developed, and the pictures suggest litheness and agility in a high degree. 'One would say a small-boned race, relying more on quickness of limb and brain than on weight and size.' The hair of the men was worn in a somewhat elaborate fashion, being done up in three coils on the top of the head, while the ends of it fell in three long curls upon the shoulders. On the other hand, their dress was extremely simple, consisting normally of nothing but a loin-cloth, girt by the broad belt already mentioned, the material of which the loin-cloth was made being frequently gaily coloured or patterned, as in the case of the Cup-Bearer, whose garment is adorned with a dainty quatre-foil design. That more elaborate robes were worn on certain occasions of importance is shown by the sarcophagus at Hagia Triada (Plate XXVIII.), where the lyre player wears a long robe coming down to the ankles and bordered with lines of colour, while the other men in the scene wear tucked robes reaching a little below the knees (or possibly baggy Turkish trousers); and also by the Harvester Vase, where the chief figure in the procession is clad in a stiff garment, which has been variously interpreted as a wadded cuirass, or as a cope of some stiff fabric.

On their feet they wore sometimes shoes, with puttees twisted round the lower part of the leg, and sometimes half-boots, as shown on the Chieftain Vase and one of the Petsofa figurines. Indeed, the footgear of the Minoans seems to have been somewhat elaborate. In the representations of the

Keftiu, on the walls of Rekh-ma-ra's tomb, the shoes are white, and have bindings of red and blue, and in some cases are delicately embroidered. Such examples as the shoe on an ivory figure found at Knossos, and the terra-cotta model of a shoe found at Sitia, show the daintiness with which the Minoans indulged themselves in the matter of footwear. In personal adornment the men to some extent made up for their simplicity in the matter of dress. The Cup-Bearer wears a couple of thick bracelets on his upper arm, and another, which bears an agate signet, on his wrist; and such decorations seem to have been in common use. The King whose figure in low relief has been reconstructed from fragments found at Knossos, wears peacock plumes upon his head, while round his neck he has a collar of fleur-de-lys, wrought, no doubt, in precious metal.

The Minoan women are depicted with a perfectly white skin, which contrasts strongly with the bronzed hue of the men. The deep coppery tint of the men, and the dead white skin of the women is, of course, to be accepted only as a convention, similar to that adopted by Egyptian artists, meant to express a difference of complexion caused by greater or less exposure to the weather; and we need not imagine that there was so great a contrast between the colouring of men and women in actual life as would appear from the paintings. If the dress of the male portion of the populace was simple, that of the female was the reverse. An elaborate and tight-

fitting bodice, cut excessively low at the neck, covered, or affected to cover, the upper part of the body, which is so wasp-waisted as to suggest universal tight-lacing. From the broad belt hung down bell-shaped skirts, sometimes flounced throughout their whole length, sometimes richly embroidered, as in the case of a votive skirt represented in faïence among the belongings of the Snake Goddess found in the Temple Repositories. In some cases—*e.g.*, that of the votaress of the Snake Goddess—the skirt, below a small panier or apron, is composed of different coloured materials combined in a chequer pattern distantly resembling tartan. A fresco from Hagia Triada represents a curious and elaborate form of dress, consisting apparently of wide trousers of blue material dotted with red crosses on a light ground, and most wonderfully frilled and vandyked. Diaphanous material was sometimes used for part of the covering of the upper part of the body, as in the case of some of the figures from the Knossos frescoes. Hair-dressing, as already noticed, was very elaborate, and above the wonderful erections of curls and ringlets which crowned their heads, the Minoan ladies, if one may judge from the Petsofa figurines, wore hats of quite modern type, and fairly comparable in size even with those of the present day. A seal from Mycenæ, representing three ladies adorned with accordion-pleated skirts, shows that heels of a fair height were sometimes worn on the shoes. Necklaces, bracelets, and other articles of adornment were in general use, and the workmanship of some of the surviving speci-

mens is astonishingly fine (Plate XXXII.). Altogether, so far as can be estimated from the representations which have come down to us, the appearance of a Minoan assembly would, to a modern eye, seem curiously mixed. The men would fit in with our ideas of their period, but the women would remind us more of a European gathering of the mid-nineteenth century.

The houses which were occupied by these modern-looking ladies and their mates were unexpectedly unlike anything in the house-building of the Classical period. There is little of the uniformity of style and arrangement which characterizes the ordinary Greek house. The Minoan burgher built his home as the requirements of his site and of his household suggested, and was not the slave of any fixed convention in the matter of plan. The houses at Gournia, Palaikastro, and Zakro, which may be taken as typical specimens of ordinary Minoan domestic architecture, must have been much more like modern houses than anything that we know of in Greek towns of the Classical period; and the elevations of Minoan villas preserved in the faïence plaques from the chest at Knossos suggest the frontages of a suburban avenue. Some of the Knossian plaques show houses of three and four storeys, with windows filled in with a red material which, as Dr. Evans suggests, may have been oiled and tinted parchment. In such houses, as distinguished from the palaces, there was no separation between the apartments of men and women. The

fabric of the houses was generally of sun-dried brick, reared upon lower walls of stone; some of the Knossian villas, however, were plastered and timbered, the round beam-ends showing in the frontage. Oblong windows took the place of the light-wells which give indirect illumination to the palace rooms. The accommodation must have been fairly extensive. The smaller houses have six to eight rooms, the larger ones twice that number; while one of the houses in Palaikastro has no fewer than twenty-three rooms.

Within doors the walls were finished with smooth plaster, and probably decorated with painting, though, of course, on a humbler scale than in the palaces. The floors were of flagstones and cement, even in the upper storeys, and in some cases of cobbles or of earth rammed hard. The furniture of the rooms has perished, except in the case of such articles as were of stone or plaster; but the evidence we possess of the comfort and even the luxury of the life of these times in other respects suggests that the townsfolk of Gournia and the other Cretan towns were not lacking in any of the essentials of a comfortable home life. The great chest at Knossos which was once decorated with the faïence plaques was, of course, part of the furnishing of a royal home, and we are not to suppose that such magnificent pieces of furniture were common; but in their own fashion the ordinary Minoan houses were doubtless quite adequately appointed, and the great variety of

domestic utensils which has survived shows that life in the Bronze Age homes of Crete was by no means a thing of primitive and rough-and-ready simplicity, but was well and carefully organized in its details. It has been remarked that 'cooking in Homer is monotonous, because no one eats anything but roast meat'; but this accusation could not be brought against the Minoans, who had evidently attained to a considerable skill and variety in the way in which they prepared their viands for the table. The three-legged copper pot which was the most common vessel for cooking purposes was supplemented by stewpans with condensing-lids, and a variety of other forms of saucepan, while the number of different types of perforated vessels for straining and other purposes shows the care with which the art of cooking was attended to. Probably the Minoan kitchen, though we are still much in the dark as to its form, was almost as well equipped for its special functions as the kitchen of the present day.

We are, unfortunately, without any evidence as to the appearance of the great palaces in their finished state. The inner plan can be traced, but it is difficult to arrive at any idea of what these huge buildings must have looked like from the outside. It is fairly evident, however, that there cannot have been any symmetrical balancing of the different architectural features. The palaces were more like small towns than simple residences, and the impression made upon the eye must have been due more

to the great mass and extent of the building than to any symmetry of plan. Probably we must conceive of them as great complex blocks of solid building, rising in terrace above terrace, the flat roofs giving an appearance of squareness and solidity to the whole. On a closer approach the eye would be impressed by the wide and spacious courts, the stately porticoes, the noble stairways, and the wealth of colour everywhere displayed; but, on the whole, so far as can be judged, it was only from within that the splendour of the Minoan palaces could be fairly estimated.

A palace such as that of Knossos sheltered an extraordinary variety and complexity of life. An abundance of humbler rooms served for the accommodation of the artists and artisans who were needed for the service and adornment of the palace, and of whom whole companies must have lived within the walls, 'dwelling with the king for his work,' like the potters and foresters mentioned in Scripture. Several shrines and altars provided for the religious needs of the community. Rooms of state were set apart for public audiences and for council meetings. In fact, the building was not only a King's dwelling-place, but the administrative centre of a whole empire, and within its walls there was room for the offices of the various departments and for the housing of their records.

The domestic quarter of the palace still reveals in some of its rooms the environment of luxury and beauty in which the Minoan royalties lived. The

Queen's Megaron may be taken as typical. A row of pillars rising from a low, continuous base divides the room into two parts. The upper surface of the base on either side of the pillars is of stucco moulded so as to form a long couch, which was doubtless covered with cushions when the room was in use. Light was furnished in the day-time, according to Cretan Palace practice, not by windows, but by light-wells, of which there are two, one on the south and one on the east side. In one of these light-shafts the brilliant white stucco surface which reflected the light into the room is decorated with a modelled and painted relief, of which a fragment has survived, representing a bird of gorgeous plumage, with long curving wing, and feathers of red, blue, yellow, white, and black. Near the light-well on the other side of the line of pillars, outside nature was brought within doors by a beautiful piece of fresco-painting which shows fishes swimming through the water, and dashing off foam-bells and ripples in their rapid course. Along the north wall of the room ran another gay fresco, representing a company of dancing-girls on a scale of half life-size. One of the dancers is clad in a jacket with a yellow ground and blue and red embroidered border, beneath which is a diaphanous chemise. Her left arm is bent, and her right stretched forward; her features are piquant, if not beautiful, and a slight dimple shows at the corner of her lips. Her long black hair, elaborately waved and crimped, floats out on either side of her head as she turns in the

movement of the dance. The fragments of decoration which have survived help us to realize a very beautiful room, gay with colour, yet never garish because of the softness of the indirect illumination, in which we may imagine the Minoan Court ladies, in their modern gowns, reclining on the cushions of the long couch, discussing the incidents of the last bull-grappling entertainment, the skill of the young Athenian Theseus, and the obvious infatuation of Princess Ariadne, or employing their time more usefully in some of the wonderful embroidery-work in which the fashion of the period delighted. By night the scene in the palace would be even more picturesque. Great stone lamps, standing on tall bases, and each bearing several wicks on the margin of its broad bowl of oil, flared in the rooms and corridors, lighting up the brightly coloured walls, and sending many-tinted reflections dancing from the bronze and copper vases and urns which decorated the passages and the landings of the stairways ; while through the breadths of light and shadow moved in an always changing stream of colour the gaily dressed figures of the Minoan Court.

Even at this exceedingly early stage of human progress, the various branches of industry had become fairly separated and specialized, more so, perhaps, than in the Homeric period, and a considerable variety of tools was employed in the various crafts. The carpenter was evidently a highly skilled craftsman, and the tools which have survived show the variety of work which he undertook. At

Knossos a carefully hewn tomb held, along with the body of the dead artificer, specimens of the tools of his trade—a bronze saw, adze, and chisel. 'A whole carpenter's kit lay concealed in a cranny of a Gournia house, left behind in the owner's hurried flight when the town was attacked and burned. He used saws long and short, heavy chisels for stone and light for wood, awls, nails, files, and axes much battered by use; and, what is very important to note, they resemble in shape the tools of to-day so closely that they furnish one of the strongest links between the first great civilization of Europe and our own.'* Such tools were, of course, of bronze. Probably the chief industry of the island was the manufacture and export of olive oil. The palace at Knossos has its Room of the Olive Press, and its conduit for conveying the product of the press to the place where it was to be stored for use; and probably many of the great jars now in the magazines were used for the storage of this indispensable article. As we have seen, Dr. Evans conjectures that it was the decay of the trade in oil during the troubled days after the sack of the palaces that drove the Minoans abroad from their island home to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Besides the trade in oil, it would seem that there must have been a trade in the purple of the murex, and no doubt the Keftiu mariners found a ready market for this much-prized product long before the Phœnicians dreamed of Tyrian purple. Minoan pottery was manifestly also an article of export—a fragile cargo

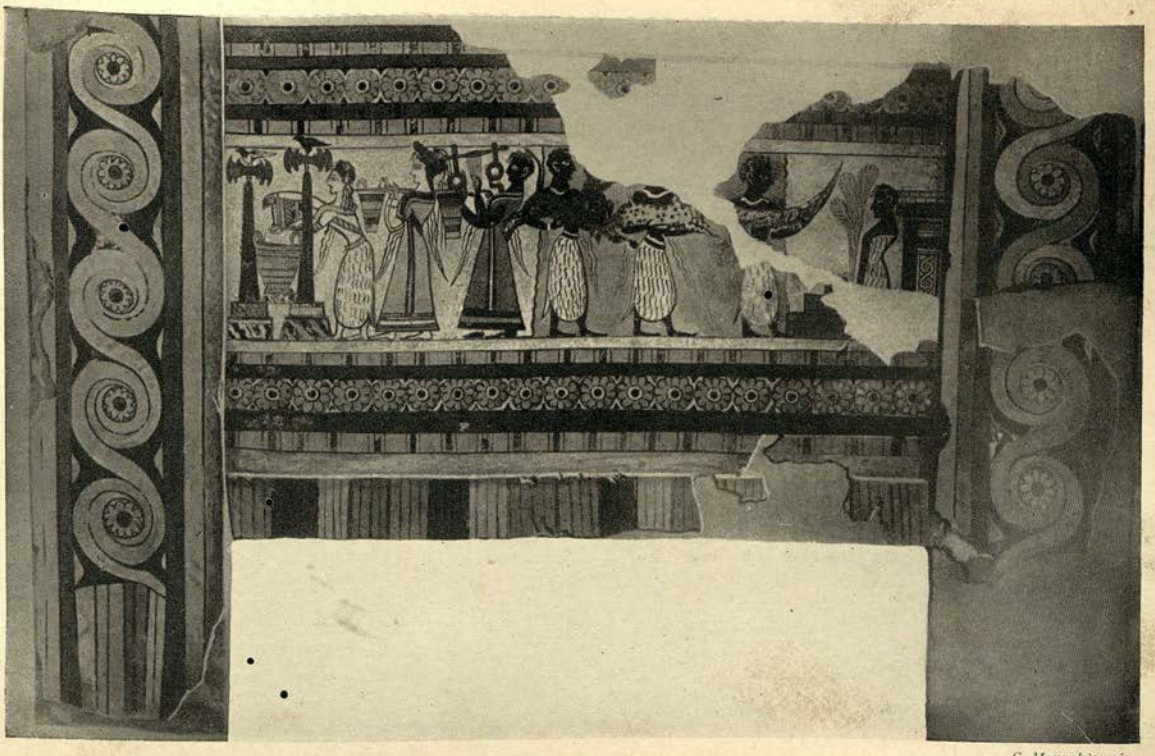
* C. H. and H. Hawes, 'Crete the Forerunner of Greece,' p. 37.

for those days. The fact that two of the Keftiu envoys in the Rekh-ma-ra frescoes carry ingots of copper of the same shape as those found by Dr. Halbherr at Hagia Triada suggests that Crete may have exported copper to Egypt in the time of Tahutmes III. as Cyprus exported it in large quantities in that of Amenhotep III.

It is unfortunate that so far we have no large-scale representations of the ships in which these early masters of the ocean conducted the sea-borne commerce of the Ægean world. The various seal-stones and impressions, and the gold ring from Mokhlos, are interesting, but it would have been much more satisfactory had we been able to see representations of the Minoan galleys as complete as those which Queen Hatshepsut has left of the ships of her merchant squadron. The vessels represented are almost universally single-masted, with one bank of oars, whose number varies from five to eleven a side, a high stern, and a bow ending either in a barbed point or an open beak, which suggests resemblances to the galleys of the sea-peoples who were defeated by Ramses III. In some instances the length of the voyage undertaken appears to be indicated. A crescent moon on the forestay, and another on the backstay of a vessel with seven oars a side, may point to a two months' voyage, while a disc over the beak of another which has no oars at all may indicate one of a year's duration, or perhaps, more probably, one of a complete month. The supreme part which the sea

played in the life of the Cretans is shown unmistakably by the fact that practically every Minoan site of importance is on the coast, or within easy reach of it, while the innate national delight in all the wonderful creatures of the marine world is seen in the constant use of their forms as motives in decorative work. No designs are so common on Minoan pottery as those derived from the sea; the octopus, the murex, the nautilus, the coral, and various forms of algæ, occur continually, and are utilized with great skill, while such pictures as the Dolphin Fresco (Plate X. 1) show the fascination which marine life had upon the Minoan mind, and the care with which it was observed. That commerce was thoroughly organized and attended to with that careful precision which seems to have been characteristic of the race is seen from the Zakro excavations, where Mr. Hogarth found 500 seal impressions in the house of a single merchant. Trade must have been very far removed indeed from primitive conditions when merchants were so careful about the security of their bales of goods.

So far as the evidence goes, the Minoan Empire does not appear to have been a specially warlike one. No doubt there was a good deal of fighting in its history, as was the case with all ancient empires. But the insular position of Crete, and the predominance which the Minoan navy established on the sea, saved the island Empire from the necessity of becoming a great military power, and the absence of the spirit of militarism is reflected in the



G. Maraghiannis

SARCOPHAGUS FROM HAGIA TRIADA (*p.* 127)

national art. While an Assyrian palace would have been decorated from end to end with pictures of barbarous bloodshed and plunder, while even the milder Egyptians would have adorned their walls with records of the conquests of their Pharaohs, the Kings of the House of Minos turned to other and more gentle scenes for the decoration of their homes. Flower-gatherers and dancing-girls, harvest festivals and religious processions, appealed to their minds far more than the endless and monotonous succession of horrors with which the Mesopotamian monarchs delighted to disfigure their walls; and even the dangers of the bull-ring, as seen on the Knossian frescoes, are mild and gentle when compared with the abominations where Teumman has his head sawed off with a short dagger, and other unfortunates are flayed alive, or have their tongues torn out.

The archives of the palace at Knossos certainly show that a military force was kept on foot, and was thoroughly organized and well looked after. There are records of numbers of chariots, and of the issue of equipments to the charioteers of the force; and many of the tablets refer to stores of lances, swords, bows, and arrows, a store of nearly 9,000 arrows being mentioned in one of the finds; while an actual magazine, containing hundreds of bronze arrow-heads, has been discovered. We may remember that in ancient warfare the Cretan bowmen were as famous as the Balearic slingers or the archers of England. On the whole, however, the

genius of the Minoans, like our own, was more commercial than military, though, no doubt, they were not devoid of the fighting spirit when occasion arose. Their kinsmen of Mycenæ and Tiryns, less happily situated, were forced to develop the military side of life; but the position and the maritime power of Crete secured for the fortunate island those long centuries of tranquil growth which were so fruitful in the arts of peace. With one possible exception, no records appear to have been found as yet dealing with the Minoan marine; but it is impossible to believe that a people so methodical, who kept such careful record of their military stores, should not have had a thoroughly organized department to deal with the infinitely more important matter of their navy, and perhaps the records of the Minoan Board of Admiralty may yet come to light and be deciphered, to enable us to understand how the first great sea-power of history dealt with its fleets.

Comparatively few agricultural tools have survived, probably because few were used; but some bronze sickles have been found. These are not curved like the modern ones, but are bent at an angle, and have a longer handle, so that the peasants would not be obliged to bend down so much in the work of reaping. The figures on the Harvester Vase carry a curious implement, which has been variously described, according as those who deal with it believe the vase to represent a triumphal march of warriors returning from battle or a harvest pro-

cession. In the first case it is described as a kind of trident with a hook attached to it, for the purpose of grappling the rigging of an opponent's vessel; in the second, it is looked upon as a common hay-fork. The resemblance to a hay-fork seems satisfactory enough, though the three prongs are much longer than the two of the implement used nowadays, and the hook attached remains unexplained; but if the implement must be supposed to be a military weapon, it seems singularly ill-contrived and inadequate for such rough service. It might conceivably be a trident for spearing fish, but, on the whole, the hay-fork idea seems most satisfactory.

Hand-querns were used for the grinding of corn, and numbers of these and of mortars for pounding grain remain. Indeed, in some cases the actual grains of barley and the pease which were stored for future use still remain in the great jars. In a jar at Hissarlik, Schliemann found no less than 440 pounds of pease, and some of his workmen lived for a time on this food, which might conceivably have been stored against a siege of Troy earlier than that recorded in the Iliad. The olive-tree was of great importance, as yielding the staple product of the island, and the fig-tree seems also to have been in general cultivation, and was held to be sacred; but, strangely enough, though wine must have been in constant use, as is shown by the vessels for its storage and service, there is only one representation of the vine, and even in that case the identity of the object depicted is doubtful. Weaving was an art in

which the Minoans were well skilled, to judge from the fabrics which are represented in the frescoes. As in Penelope's time, it was a domestic art, and probably almost every household had its loom, where the women turned out the materials for ordinary wear. In many of the houses have been found the loom-weights, mostly of stone or clay, which took the place of the more modern weaver's beam in serving to keep the threads taut; and there are also numbers of the stone discs which were attached, in spinning, to the foot of the spindle, to keep it straight and in motion. These loom-weights and spindle-discs are frequently ornamented with spiral incisions.

But the arts in which the islanders were supreme were those of the potter and the metal-worker, the chief evidences of whose skill have been already discussed. The reputation of Crete as a centre of metal-working became legendary in ancient times, and, in all likelihood, the bronze-worker and his fellows, the gold- and silver-smiths, attained the height of their skill before their brethren the potters, since, as we have seen, many of the finest pottery specimens are obviously designed on bronze, or, at all events, on metal models, the resemblance even going so far as the copying of the seams and rivets of the metal originals. Bronze was smelted in furnaces, the remains of one of which still exist near Gournia; and was cast in moulds, many of which have survived. The tools and weapons which were made of the metal show an average alloy of about











MINOAN POTTERY (*pp.* 198 & 204)

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ten per cent. of tin. For beaten work, copper in an almost pure state appears to have been used. Gold was in extensive use for the best class of ornamental work, and the Vaphio cups, which are now held to have been imported to Laconia from Crete, are evidence of the marvellous skill which the Minoan goldsmiths had attained; while the necklaces and other articles of personal adornment found at Mokhlos and in the beehive tombs at Phæstos (Plate XXXII.), are only to be matched, among ancient work, by the diadems of the Twelfth Dynasty Princesses, found at Dahshur in Egypt. Silver is comparatively scarce on Minoan, as on other Ægean sites, though a number of fine silver vessels have been found at Knossos and elsewhere; and this scarcity is perhaps due, not only to the greed of the plunderers, but also to the fact that, during the greater part of the period covered by the Minoan Empire, the metal itself was actually scarcer and more valuable than gold. In Egypt, whose supplies of silver apparently came from Cilicia, it maintained a higher value than gold until the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty, or about the period of the fall of Knossos; but then and thereafter its value fell, owing to increasing supplies, below that of the more precious metal. It does not appear that the gold-silver alloy—'electrum,' of which the Egyptians were so fond—was used by the Minoans.

Of the social life of the people in these prehistoric times we know practically nothing. Only one inference, possibly precarious enough, may be made from

one of the features of the architecture of Knossos. There is no attempt to seclude the life of the palace from that of the town and country around it. On the contrary, the building seems almost to have been arranged with the view of affording the citizens of the Minoan Empire every facility for intercourse with the royal household. The great West Court, with its portico and its seats along the palace wall, suggests considerable freedom of access for the populace to the immediate neighbourhood of royalty. It is perhaps rather a large inference to conclude that 'the very architecture of the Palaces of Knossos and Phæstos may testify to the power of the democracy';* but at least the thoughtfulness with which the comfort of the people visiting the palace was provided for, and the general openness and lack of any jealous seclusion, testified to by the whole style of the buildings, suggest that the relations between the Kings of the House of Minos and their subjects were much more human and pleasant than those obtaining in most ancient kingdoms.

From their art one would, on the whole, conclude the people to have been a somewhat attractive race, frankly enjoying the more pleasant aspects of life, and capable of a keen delight in all the beauties of Nature. Minoan art has little that is sombre about it; it is redolent of the open air and the free ocean, and a people who so rejoiced in natural beauty and delighted to surround themselves with their own reproductions and interpretations of it can scarcely

* Mosso, 'The Palaces of Crete,' p. 163.

have been bowed beneath a heavy yoke of servitude, or have lived other than a comparatively free and independent life. How much the Greeks of the Classic period imbibed of the spirit of this gifted and artistic race we can only imagine. The artistic standpoint of the Hellenic Greek is somewhat different from that of his Minoan or Mycenæan forerunner, and he has lost that keen feeling for Nature which is so conspicuous in the work of the earlier stock; but the two races are at least at one in that profound love of beauty which is the dominant characteristic of the Greek nature, and it may well be that something of that feeling formed part of the heritage which the conqueror took over from the conquered, and which, added to the virility and intellectual power of the northern race, made the historic Greek the most brilliant type of humanity that the world has ever seen.

CHAPTER XI

LETTERS AND RELIGION

Of all the discoveries yet made on Cretan soil, that which, in the end, will doubtless prove to be of the greatest importance is the discovery of the various systems of writing which the Minoans successively devised and used. As yet knowledge with regard to these systems has not advanced beyond the description of the materials and their comparison with those furnished by other scripts, a task which has so far been accomplished by Dr. Evans in the first volume of his 'Scripta Minoa.' An immense amount of material has been accumulated, and has been separated into various classes, which have been shown to be characteristic of different periods of Minoan history. It is possible to arrive at a general understanding of the matters to which certain items of the material refer, but the actual reading of the inscribed tablets has as yet proved to be impossible. To all appearance, moreover, a considerable proportion of the material appears to be not literary, in any true sense, but to consist of inventories and accounts, perhaps also of legal

documents and other such records of purely business and practical interest. Even so it would be a matter of no small importance could it be found possible to decipher the records, let us say, of the War Office or Admiralty of Knossos, or to survey the details of royal house-keeping in those far-off days; and it may still be hoped that, when the ardently desired bilingual inscription at last turns up and makes decipherment possible, we may find that documents of more genuinely literary interest are not altogether lacking. One thing at least is abundantly clear—that, as Dr. Evans put it in the summary of his first year's results, 'that great early civilization was not dumb,' but, on the contrary, had means of expression amply adequate to its needs.

In 1894 M. Perrot wrote:* 'As at present advised, we can continue to affirm that for the whole of this period, nowhere, neither in the Peloponnese nor in Greece proper, no more on the buildings than on the thousand and one objects of luxury or domestic use that have come out of the tombs, has there anything been discovered which resembled any kind of writing.' The statement was perfectly true to the facts as then known; but it was obviously unthinkable that, while the Egyptians and Babylonians had their fully developed scripts, and while ruder races, such as the Hittites, had their systems of writing, the men who built the splendid walls and palaces of Tiryns and Mycenæ, and

* Perrot et Chipiez, 'La Grèce primitive: l'Art mycénien,' p. 985.

wrought the diadems and decorations of the Shaft-Graves, should have been so far back in one of the chiefest essentials of human progress as to be unable to communicate with one another by means of writing. We have already seen how the discoveries of the first year's work at Knossos settled that question for ever, and revealed the existence of more than one form of writing. Since then the material has been rapidly accumulating, and at present the number of objects—tablets, labels, and other articles—inscribed with the various Cretan scripts can be counted by thousands.

The earliest form of Minoan writing that can be traced consists of rude pictographic symbols engraved upon bead-seals and gems. This primitive pictographic writing is characteristic of the Early Minoan period, and throughout the succeeding period of Middle Minoan it was gradually developed into a hieroglyphic system which is believed to present some analogies to the Hittite form of writing. But in the latest phases of the Third Middle Minoan period there begins to appear, at Knossos and elsewhere, a series of inscriptions in a very different style. The characters are no longer hieroglyphic, but have become definitely linear, and are arranged very much as in ordinary writing. In general they are incised upon the clay tablets of which so many hundreds have been found, but there are several instances in which they have been written with ink, apparently with a reed pen, as in the case of the two Middle Minoan III. cups

found at Knossos, which bear linear inscriptions executed before the clay was fired. While in the case of the hieroglyphic inscriptions the characters run indifferently from left to right, or from right to left, in this linear script their fixed direction is the usual one, from left to right. Suffixes were apparently used to indicate gender, and pictorial signs indicating the contents of the document are also in use, though more sparingly than they came to be in the later form of script. Such signs as occur seem to show that the documents in which they are found mainly related to matters of business. The saffron-flower, various vessels, tripods, and balances, probably for the weighing of precious metals, occur most frequently among these determinatives.

At Knossos this form of linear writing, Dr. Evans's Class A, appears to have had a comparatively short vogue. Documents belonging to it are only found in the particular stratum which is connected with Middle Minoan III., and are to be dated, according to Dr. Evans's latest revision of the chronology, not later than 1600 B.C., the period at which Middle Minoan III. closes. In the Late Minoan periods which follow, the linear script of Class A is superseded at Knossos by another form, Class B. In other parts of the island, however, Class A seems to have survived as a general form of writing much longer than at Knossos. At Hagia Triada the very large deposits of linear writing—larger, indeed, than the representation of Class A at Knossos—belong

to the First Late Minoan period, and are contemporary with the wonderful work of the steatite vases and the fresco of the hunting-cat; while at Phæstos the final catastrophe of the palace took place at a time when the linear writing of Class A was still in full use. At Zakro, Palaikastro, Gournia, and elsewhere, examples of this script have been found, showing that it was prevalent, at all events, throughout Central and Eastern Crete; and in all cases it is associated with remains which belong to the close of Middle Minoan III. and the beginnings of the Late Minoan period. But it would appear that this form of writing was not confined to Crete, but was more widely diffused. Traces of it, or of a script very closely allied with it, have been found at Thera, while at Phylakopi in Melos evidence has come to light of a whole series of marks closely corresponding to the Cretan Class A. This would seem to suggest what in itself is entirely probable, that the language used in Minoan Crete was predominant, or at all events was understood and largely used, throughout the Ægean area. The inscription on the libation table found by Dr. Evans at the Dictæan Cave belongs to this class, and also that upon the similar object found by Mr. Currelly at Palaikastro.

When, at the beginning of the Late Minoan period, the Palace of Knossos was remodelled, another great change accompanied the architectural one. This was the entire supersession of the linear script, Class A, by another similar but independent form, which has been named Class B. Somewhat



LATE MINOAN VASE FROM MYCENÆ (*p.* 206)

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remarkably, although the specimens of the script discovered at the Palace of Knossos and its immediate dependencies are far more numerous than those of Class A, the use of Class B seems, so far as the evidence yet collected goes, to have been entirely confined to Knossos. The beginning of the use of this system may have been in the early part of the fifteenth century B.C., and it was in full service at the great catastrophe of Knossos, at the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century B.C. Its use still continued after the fall of the Minoan power, tablets inscribed with this form of writing being found in the Late Minoan III. House of the Fetish Shrine at Knossos. According to Dr. Evans, whose 'Scripta Minoa' sums up all that is at present known of these enigmatic Cretan writings, Class B is not a mere outgrowth of Class A. The scripts are certainly allied, and there are indications that B is the more highly developed of the two, having a smaller selection of characters and a less complicated system of compound signs; but at the same time several of the signs found in B do not occur in A at all, and some of those which belong to both scripts are found in a more primitive form in B. The language expressed in both scripts must, however, have been essentially the same. It is suggested, therefore, that in the supersession of Class A by Class B we have another indication of the dynastic revolution which is supposed to have caused that ruin of the palace which closed the Middle Minoan period.

The records of Class B give evidence of a

very considerable advance in the art of writing. 'The characters themselves have a European aspect. They are of upright habit, and of a simple and definite outline, which throws into sharp relief the cumbrous and obscure cuneiform system of Babylonia. Although not so cursive in form as the Hieratic or Demotic types of Egyptian writing, there is here a much more limited selection of types. It would seem that the characters stood for syllables or even letters, though they could in most cases also be used as words. . . . The spaces and lines between the words, the *espacement* into distinct paragraphs, and the variation in the size of the characters on the same tablet, according to the relative importance of the text, show a striving after clearness and method such as can by no means be said to be a characteristic of Classical Greek inscriptions.'* A decimal system of numbers was in use, the highest single amount referred to being 19,000, and percentages were evidently well understood, as a whole series of tablets is devoted to them.

The tablets themselves were originally of unburnt, but sun-dried, clay, and their preservation, as we have seen, is probably due to the excessive heat to which they were exposed during the great fire which destroyed the palace. 'Fire itself, so fatal to other libraries, has thus insured the preservation of the archives of Minoan Knossos.' Great care was plainly bestowed upon the storage of the tablets.

* 'Scripta Minoa,' pp. 39, 40.

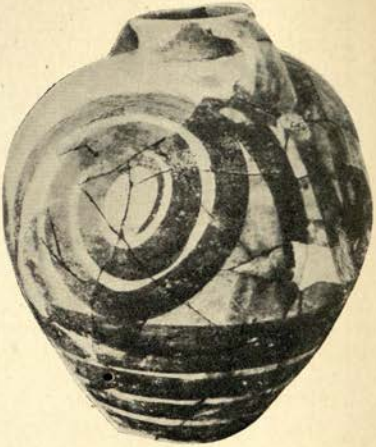
They were stored in chests and coffers of various materials, and were evidently carefully separated according to the different departments to which their contents referred. In one deposit near the northern entrance, which was the 'Sea-Gate' of the palace, the largest of the sealings which had secured the cases in which the tablets were stored bore a representation of a ship, possibly an indication of the fact that these tablets belonged to the Minoan Board of Admiralty. One set of tablets had been stored in a room which presents all the appearance of having been an office, and the frequent occurrence in this deposit of the figures of a horse's head, a chariot, and a cuirass, suggests that the store belonged to the Minoan War Office, and refers to the equipment of the Chariot Brigade of the Knossian army.

Further evidence of the business-like methods of the Minoan officials was given by the fact that many of the seals belonging to the various stores were countermarked on the face, and had their backs countersigned and endorsed, evidently by examining officials, while they appear to have been regularly filed and docketed for reference. Indeed, the Minoan methods have already borne the test of having been accepted as evidence in a modern court of law. 'In 1901,' says Dr. Evans, 'I discovered that certain tablets had been abstracted from the excavations, and had shortly afterwards been purchased by the museum at Athens. It further appeared that one of our workmen—a certain

Aristides—had left the excavation about the same time for Greece, and had been seen in Athens offering "antikas" for sale under suspicious circumstances. On examining the inscriptions on the stolen tablets I observed a formula that showed that some or all of the pieces belonged to a deposit found in Magazine XV. A reference to our day-books brought out the fact that the same Aristides had taken part in the excavation of this particular magazine a little before the date of his hasty departure. On his return to Crete, some months later, he was accordingly arrested, and the evidence supplied by the Minoan formula was accepted by the Candia Tribunal as a crowning proof of his guilt. Aristides—"the Unjust"—was thus condemned to three months' imprisonment.' Few criminals attain to the dignity of being convicted on evidence 3,500 years old.

Certain of the tablets contain lists of persons of both sexes, apparently denoted by their personal names, the signs which appear to stand for the name being followed in each case by an ideograph which is the determinative of 'man,' or 'woman,' as the case may be. It is, of course, impossible to say as yet to what rank or class the people thus catalogued may have belonged; but the conjecture may be hazarded that these lists may be the major-domo's records of the male and female slaves of the household, or perhaps of the artisans who appear to have dwelt within the precincts of the palace. Another type of record is given by tablets such as that represented









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KAMARES VASES FROM PHÆSTOS AND HAGIA TRIADA (*pp.* 120 & 197)

in Plate XIV. The tablet contains eight lines of well-written inscription, and consists apparently of twenty words, divided into three paragraphs. In this case there are no determinatives and no numerals; and it is possible that the document may be a contract, or perhaps an official proclamation.

That such tablets were not the only form in which the Minoans executed the writing of their various documents is evident from the fact already noticed, that inscriptions have been found executed with a reed-pen, and, though those extant are written on clay vessels, it is obvious that the reed-pen was not a very suitable instrument for writing on such materials, and that its existence presupposes some substance more adapted to the cursive writing of a pen—parchment, possibly, or papyrus, which could be readily obtained from Egypt. Unfortunately, such materials, on which, in all probability, the real literary documents of the Minoans, if there were any such documents, would be written, can scarcely have survived the fire which destroyed the palace, or, if by any chance they escaped that, the subsequent action of the climate; so that whatever genuinely literary fragments may yet come to light must be looked for on the larger tablets, and at the best can scarcely be more than brief extracts. We cannot expect from Crete a wealth of papyri such as Egypt has preserved for the archæologist.

Into quite a different category from any of the ordinary Minoan tablets comes the disc found at Phæstos in 1908. Its general character has been

already described. The long inscription which covers both of its faces is written in a form of hieroglyphics which, to some extent, resembles the Minoan pictographic system, but is not the same. The crested helmets which occur frequently as signs, the round shields, the fashion of dress of both men and women, and the style of architecture depicted in the hieroglyphic rendering of a house or pagoda, are not Minoan ; and, on the whole, the evidence seems to point to the disc being the product of some allied culture, perhaps Lycian, in which a language closely akin to that of Minoan Crete was used. The inscription on the disc is carefully balanced and arranged, and each side contains exactly the same number of sign-groups, with one additional group on face A, which is separated from the preceding part of the inscription by a dash. Certain sets of sign-groups recur in the same order, as though they constituted some kind of refrain. From these indications it has been suggested that the whole inscription is a metrical composition, a short poem or hymn—perhaps one leaf of an Anatolian Book of Psalms whose other pages have perished. It is agreed that the language and religion of the western coast of Asia Minor were closely allied to those of Crete, and it is possible that when the Minoans developed their own language on somewhat different lines from the mainlanders, they maintained in parts of their religious service the old form of the speech common to themselves and their Anatolian relatives, as a kind of sacred language.

Thus, it is abundantly evident that the civilization of Minoan Crete, far from being dumb, had varied and perfectly adequate means of expressing itself. The old Cretan tradition that the Phœnicians did not invent the letters of the alphabet, but only changed those already existing, is amply justified; for this seems to have been precisely what they did. The Phœnician mind, if not original, was at all events practical. The great stumbling-block in the way of the ancient scripts was their complexity—a fault which the Minoan users of the Linear Script, Class B, had evidently already begun to recognize and endeavour to amend. What the Phœnicians did was to carry the process of simplification farther still, and to appropriate for their own use out of the elements already existing around them a conveniently short and simple system of signs. The position which they came to occupy, after the Minoan empire of the sea had passed away, as the great carriers and middlemen of the Mediterranean, gave their system a spread and a utility possible to no other system of writing; and so the Phœnician alphabet gradually came to take its place as the basis of all subsequent scripts. Unquestionably it was a great and important service which was thus rendered by them; but, all the same, the beginnings of European writing must be traced not to them, but to their predecessors the Minoans, and the clay tablets of Knossos, Phæstos, and Hagia Triada are the lineal ancestors of all the written literature of Europe.

The Sea-Kings of Crete

In attempting to deal with the Minoan religion we are met by the fact that it is as yet quite impossible to present any connected view of the subject. As in the case of their literature we have the actual records but cannot read them, so in the case of their religion a considerable mass of facts is apparent, but we have no means of co-ordinating them so as to arrive at any definite idea of a religious system. Some of the ritual we can see, and even understand something of the Divinity to whom it was addressed, but the theology is lacking. Accordingly, nothing more can be done than to present the fragmentary facts which are apparent.

The Minoans, it seems fairly clear, were never, like their successors the Greeks, the possessors of a well-peopled Pantheon; nor was the chief object of their adoration a male deity like the Greek Zeus. There are, indeed, traces of a male divinity, who was adopted by the Greeks when they obtained predominance in the island, as the representative of their own supreme deity, and who became the Cretan Zeus. But in Minoan times this being occupied a very subordinate place, and undoubtedly the chief object of worship was a goddess — a Nature Goddess, a Great Mother — *πότνια θηρῶν*, the Lady of the Wild Creatures — who was the source of all life, higher and lower, its guardian during the period of its earthly existence, and its ruler in the underworld.

The functions of this great deity, it has been aptly pointed out, are substantially those claimed for her-

self by Artemis in Browning's poem, 'Artemis Prologizes':

> 'Through heaven I roll my lucid moon along;
> I shed in hell o'er my pale people peace;
> On earth, I, caring for the creatures, guard
> Each pregnant yellow wolf and fox-bitch sleek,
> And every feathered mother's callow brood,
> And all that love green haunts and loneliness.'

She was a goddess alike of the air, the earth, and the underworld, and representations of her have survived in which her various attributes are expressed. As goddess of the air, she is represented by a female figure crowned with doves; as goddess of the underworld, her emblems are the snakes, which we see twined round the faïence figure at Knossos, or the terra-cotta in the Gournia shrine. Her figure is often seen upon seals and gems, standing on the top of the rock or mountain, with guardian lions in attendance, one on either side, and sometimes with a male votary in the background.

The earliest form of her worship, and one which proved very persistent, was apparently aniconic. The divinity was not embodied in any graven image, but was inherent in such objects as the rude natural concretions found in the House of the Fetish Shrine, or was supposed to dwell in sacred trees, on which sometimes perch the doves which indicate that the goddess is present as ruler of the air, or which are twined with serpents, showing her presence as goddess of the earth and underworld. In the place

of sacred trees we have often sacred pillars, which seem to have been objects of worship down to Late Minoan II. at least, since in the Royal Villa at Knossos, dating from this period, there is a pillar-room similar to the much earlier pillar-rooms of the Great Palace. The little group of three pillars found at Knossos evidently represents the divinity in her aspect as a heavenly goddess, for the pillars have doves perching upon their capitals. Sometimes, as in the case of the Lion Gate at Mycenæ, and other representations, we have the pillar with the two supporting lions, an anticipation of the anthropomorphic figure of the goddess on the rock. It is possible that in some cases the figures of the Double Axes standing between horns of consecration were also looked upon as embodiments of the divinity. A similar mode of representing deity occurs in the earlier stages of many religions, and the sacred pillar set up by Jacob at Bethel may be instanced as an example of its presence in the beginnings of the Hebrew worship.

In general the Minoan Great Mother appears to have been looked upon as a being of beneficence, and as the giver of 'every good and perfect gift'; but her association with the lion and the snake shows that there was also a more mysterious and awful side to her character. When the later Greeks came into the island and found this deity in possession, she became identified, in the various aspects of her many-sided nature, with various goddesses of the Hellenic Pantheon. Foremost and specially

she became Rhea, the mother of the gods, who had fled to Crete to bear her son Zeus. Otherwise she was Hera, the sister and the spouse of Zeus, and in this case the story of the marriage of the great goddess and the supreme god probably represents the fusion of religious ideas on the part of the two races, the conquerors taking over the deity of the conquered race, and uniting her with the Sky God whom they had brought with them from their Northern home. She also survived as Aphrodite, as Demeter, and, in her capacity as Lady of the Wild Beasts, as Artemis.

The suggestion of the association of Zeus with the Minoan goddess may have been given to the Northern conquerors by a feature of the Cretan religion which they found already in existence. On certain seal impressions and engraved gems there are indications that the great Nature Goddess was sometimes associated with a male divinity. This being, however, seems to have occupied an obscure and inferior position. In most of the scenes in which he is represented he is either in the background, or reverentially stands before the seated female divinity. It would appear that the Achæans appropriated this insignificant god as the representative of their own Zeus, attributed to him birth from the Great Goddess in her own cave-sanctuary of Dicte, and endowed him with many of the attributes which she had formerly possessed, including the Double Axe emblem of sovereignty, so that in Hellenic times the supreme deity of the island was always the Cretan Zeus,

Zeus of the Double Axe, though in reality he was no Cretan god at all, or at best a secondary divinity, dressed in borrowed plumes and with greatness thrust upon him.

As to the forms of worship with which the Great Mother of Crete was served, comparatively little is known. The most striking feature is the seemingly total absence of what we should call temples. In this respect Crete presents a curious contrast to Egypt: in Egypt we have an abundance of vast temples, but practically no surviving palaces; in Crete the case is exactly reversed, and we have huge palaces but no temples. The reason of this appears to be, as Dr. Mackenzie has pointed out,* that the Minoan religion was of an entirely domestic character. 'At Knossos all shrines are either house-shrines or palace-shrines. The divinities are household and dynastic divinities having an ancestral character and an ancestral reputation to maintain.' To put it in a word, worship in the Minoan religion was essentially Family Worship. No doubt there were public ceremonials also, in which the King, who seems to have been Priest as well as King (if, indeed, he was not viewed as an incarnation of deity), performed the principal part; but there can have been nothing like the habitual publicity of parts of the worship of the god which was contemplated in the great peristyle courts of the Egyptian temples and the processional arrangements of part of their service. 'At Knossos,' says Dr.

* *Annual of the British School at Athens*, vol. xiv., p. 366.

Mackenzie, 'we found, as a matter of fact, that there was a tendency for each house to have a room set apart for family worship. Of such shrines the palace was found to have more than one. Those shrines were found to be in a very private part of the house, and usually to have no thoroughfare through them.'

What these shrines were like we may to some extent judge from the fragmentary fresco found at Knossos, representing one of the pillar-shrines where the Great Goddess was worshipped in her emblems of the sacred pillars. The structure consists of a taller central chamber, with a lower wing on either side of it. The material of which it is built is apparently wood, faced and decorated in certain parts with chequer-work in black-and-white plaster. The whole building rests upon large blocks of stone, immediately above which in the central chamber comes a solid piece of building, adorned first with the chequer-work, and then, above this, with two half-rosettes bordered with *kuanos*. Over this rises the open chamber of the shrine, which contains nothing but two pillars of the familiar Minoan-Mycenæan type, tapering downwards from the capitals. These rise from between the sacred horns, which occur in practically every religious scene as emblems of consecration (*cf.* the 'horns of the altar' in the Hebrew temple worship). The lower chambers on either side contain each a single pillar, again rising from between the horns of consecration. A Minoan lady, dressed in a gown of bluish-green, sits with her back to the wall of the right-hand lower chamber, and the scale of the

shrine is given by the fact that, her seat being on the same level as the floor of the chamber, her head is in a line with the roof beam which rests on the capital of the sacred pillar. The remains of an actual shrine discovered in 1907 close to the Central Court at Knossos show that the fresco does not exaggerate the smallness of the sacred buildings. The Gournia shrine, situated in the centre of the town, is about twelve feet square, and its discoverer believes that the walls of the sacred enclosure may never have stood more than eighteen inches high. Here, again, were the horns of consecration, the doves, and the snakes twined round the image of the goddess.

Of what sort were the acts of worship in connection with the Minoan Religion? Sacrifice was certainly prominent, and the bull was probably the chief victim offered to the goddess. In one of the scenes on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, a bull is being sacrificed, and his blood is dripping into a vessel placed beneath his head. Behind is the figure of a woman, whose hands are stretched out, presumably to hold the cords with which the victim is bound. Two kids crouch on the ground below the bull, perhaps to be offered in their turn. Libation also formed part of the ceremonial, and on the same sarcophagus there are two scenes in which it occurs. In the one instance (Plate XXVIII.), the vessel into which the offering is being poured stands between two sacred Double Axes with birds perched upon them; in the other the libation-vessel stands upon an altar with a Double Axe behind it. The three

receptacles of the Dictæan Libation Table suggest a threefold offering like that of mingled milk and honey, sweet wine, and water, which, in the Homeric period, was made to the Shades of the Dead and to the Nymphs.

As was perhaps natural in the cult of a goddess, the chief part in the ritual seems to have been taken by priestesses. Men share in the ceremonies also, but not so frequently, and apparently in subordinate rôles. Part of the ritual evidently consisted of dancing, and music also had its place, as is evident from the figures of the lyre and flute players on the sarcophagus of Hagia Triada. The question of whether the Minoans had any worship of ancesters or sacrifice to the dead is raised by several relics. Above the Shaft-Graves at Mycenæ stood a circular altar, where offerings must have been made either to the Shades of the Dead or on behalf of them, and the scenes on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, resembling so curiously those of the Egyptian ceremony of 'the Opening of the Mouth,' suggest a belief in the continued existence of the spirit, either as an object to be propitiated by sacrifice, or as a being which needed to be sustained in its disembodied state by offerings of meat and drink.

The relation of the Minoan King to the religion of his country is a point of some interest, though the facts known are scarcely sufficient to afford ground for more than surmise. The very structure of the palace at Knossos gives evidence of the importance of the part which he played in spiritual matters, and

of the intimate connection which existed in the Minoan, as in so many other ancient faiths, between Royalty and Religion. There are not only several shrines and altars in the palace, but it is probable, as Dr. Mackenzie has pointed out,* that the so-called bathrooms at Knossos and Phæstos are not bathrooms at all, but small chapels or oratories, so that altogether religion bulks very largely in the arrangements of the Royal dwelling. In fact, the Kings and Queens of Knossos were Priest-Kings and Priest-Queens, the heads of the spiritual as well as of the material life of their people; and it is not at all unlikely, from what is known of the religious views of other ancient peoples, that the Priest-King was looked upon as an incarnation of divinity. If so, of what divinity? It is here that, in all likelihood, we get near the heart of the Minotaur legend. 'The characteristic mythical monster of Crete,' says Miss Jane Harrison,† 'was the bull-headed Minotaur. Behind the legend of Pasiphae, made monstrous by the misunderstanding of immigrant conquerors, it can scarcely be doubted that there lurks some sacred mystical ceremony of ritual wedlock (ἱερὸς γάμος) with a primitive bull-headed divinity. . . . The bull-Dionysos of Thrace, when he came to Crete, found a monstrous god, own cousin to himself. . . . Of the ritual of the bull-god in Crete, we know that it consisted in part of the tearing and eating of a bull,

* *Annual of the British School at Athens*, xiv., p. 366. The suggestion is also made by Mosso, 'The Palaces of Crete,' pp. 64-66.

† 'Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion,' pp. 482, 483.

and behind is the dreadful suspicion of human sacrifice.' The actual evidence found on Minoan sites for the existence of such a bull-headed divinity is somewhat slight, the clearest instance being a seal-impression from Knossos, representing a monster who bears an animal head, possibly a bull's, upon a human body, and who is evidently regarded as divine, since he is seated and reverently approached by a human worshipper; but, taken in connection with the universal currency of the Minotaur legend, it is probably sufficient. What relation this monstrous divinity held to the other objects of Minoan worship is not apparent.

It may be, then, that this deity was the one of whom the King was supposed to be the representative and incarnation, and in that case the bull-grappling, which was so constant a feature of the palace sports, had a deeper significance, and was in reality part of the ceremonial associated with the worship of the Cretan bull-god. In this connection Professor Murray has emphasized* certain facts in connection with the legendary history of Minos, which would seem to link the Cretan monarchy with a custom not infrequently observed in connection with other ancient monarchies and faiths. It will be remembered that the legend of Minos states variously that he 'ruled for nine years, the gossip of Great Zeus,' and that every nine years he went into the cave of Zeus or of the bull-god, to converse with Zeus, to receive new commandments, and to

* 'The Rise of the Greek Epic,' pp. 127, 128.

give account of his stewardship. The nine-year period recurs in the account of the bloody tribute of seven youths and seven maidens who were offered to the Minotaur every ninth year. May we not, therefore, have in these statements a distorted recollection of the fact that the Royal Incarnation of the Bull-God originally held his office only for a term of nine years, and that at the end of that period he went into the Dictæan Cave, the sanctuary of his divinity, and was there slain in sacrifice, while from the cave his successor came forth, and was hailed as the rejuvenated incarnation of divinity, to reign in his turn, and then to perish as his predecessor had done? In this case the seven youths and seven maidens who were offered to the Minotaur at the end of the nine-year period may have been slain with him to be his companions and servants in the underworld, or, as is perhaps more likely, they may, in a later stage of the custom, have been accepted as his substitutes, so that the death of the King was merely a ritual one.

Of course, this explanation of the Minos legend and the story of the human tribute is in the meantime only a supposition, and not susceptible of absolute proof; but the constant recurrence of the nine-year period is, at least, very striking, and it is worth remembering that a custom precisely similar to that suggested has existed in connection with several ancient monarchies, and, indeed, survives to the present day. In the ancient Ethiopian kingdom the King was obliged to slay himself when commanded to do so by the priests. A similar custom

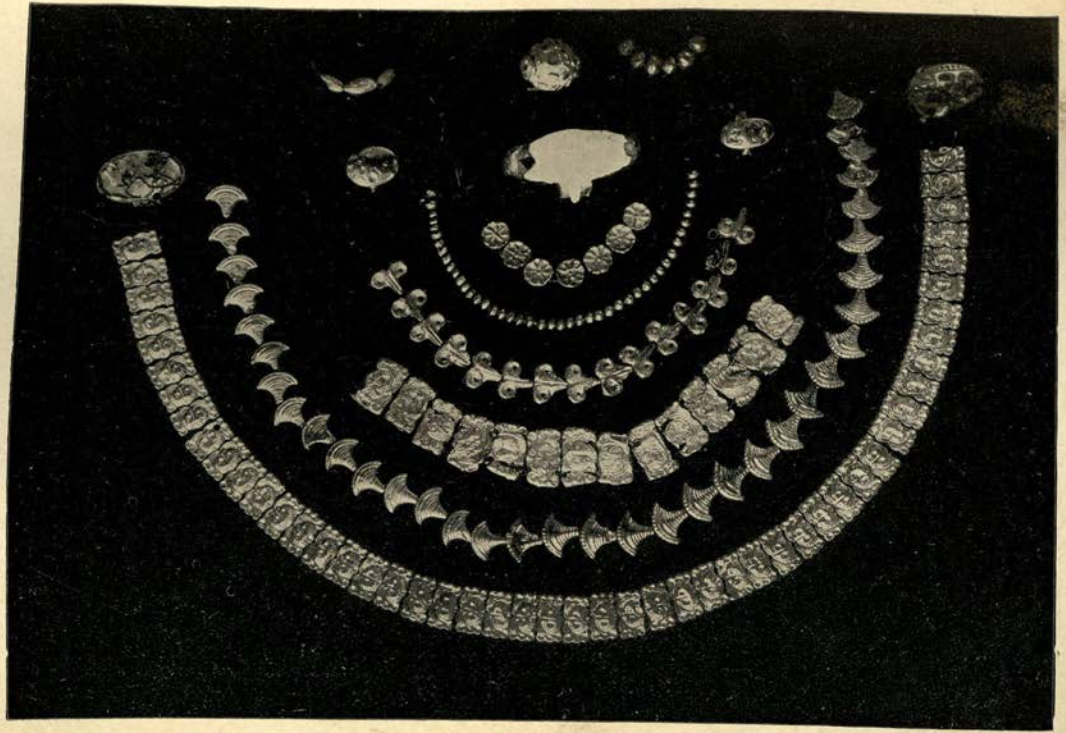
prevailed in Babylonia and among the ancient Prussians, while several modern African tribes slay their King when the first sign of age or infirmity begins to show itself in him. Professor Flinders Petrie has shown* that the greatest of the Egyptian feasts, the 'Sed' Festival, was a ceremonial survival of a time when the Pharaoh, the Priest-King and representative of God on earth, was slain at fixed intervals. The object in all such cases is manifestly to secure that the incarnation of divinity shall always be in the prime of his vigour, and shall never know decay. It is impossible, no doubt, to say that such a feature belonged to the Minoan religious polity; the evidence is not such as to admit of certainty, yet it is not unlikely that in a custom similar to this lies the interpretation of the main features of the Minotaur legend.

Such, then, was the Empire of the Minoan Sea-Kings as it has been revealed to us by the excavations and researches of the last ten years. Apart from the actual information gained of this great race, which must henceforward be regarded as one of the originating sources of Greek civilization and learning, and therefore, to a great extent, of all European culture, perhaps the most striking and interesting result that has been attained is the remarkable confirmation given to the broad outlines of those traditions about Crete which have survived in the legends and in the narratives of the Greek historians. The fable of the Minotaur is now seen to be no mere

* 'Researches in Sinai,' pp. 181-185.

wild and monstrous imagining, but a reflection, vague and grotesque as seen through the mist of centuries, of customs which did actually exist in the palace life of Knossos, and were very probably parts of the religious practice of the country. The slaying of the Minotaur by the Athenian Theseus may well be an echo of the conquest of the Minoan Empire by the mainland tribes. The story which makes Theseus bring up from the Palace of Amphitrite the ring which Minos had thrown into the sea, seems almost certainly to be a symbolic expression of the passing over of the sea-power of the Ægean from the once-omnipotent Minoans to the Achæans and the other restless tribes who for generations after the fall of Knossos held the dominion of the ocean, and were the terror of all peaceful nations, and a menace to the existence of even so great a power as Egypt. No one now dreams of hesitating to accept the statements of Herodotus and Thucydides as to the great sea-empire of Crete. Whoever the Minos to whom they allude may have been—whether he was actually a single great historical monarch who brought the glory of the kingdom to its culmination, or whether the name was the title of a race of Kings, is a matter of small moment. In either case the sea-power of Minoan Crete was a reality which endured, not for one reign, but for many reigns; and it is practically certain that, during a long period of history, the whole sea-borne trade of Europe, Asia, and Africa, was in the hands of these, the earliest lords of the ocean.

The recollections of the fallen power that survived



G. Maraghiannis

GOLDSMITHS' WORK FROM BEEHIVE TOMBS, PHÆSTOS (*p.* 216)

in the Greek mind were chiefly those connected with the oppressive aspect of the dominion which the Lord of Knossos exercised over the Ægean area; but in Egypt there lingered for centuries a tradition which did more justice to the glories of Minoan Crete. In the Timæus, Plato tells a story of how Solon went to Egypt, and was told by a priest at Sais that long ago there had been a great island in the western sea, where a wonderful central power held sway, not only over the whole of its own land, but also over other islands and parts of the continent. In an attempt at universal conquest, this island State made war upon Greece and Egypt, but was defeated by the Athenians, and overwhelmed by the sea as a punishment for its sins, leaving only a range of mud-banks, dangerous to navigation, to mark the place where it had been. In the Timæus and Critias, Plato describes with considerable detail the features of the island State, and the details are such that he might almost have been describing what the Egyptian priest who originally told the story was no doubt endeavouring to describe—the actual port and Palace of Knossos, with the life that went on there. 'The great harbour, for example, with its shipping and its merchants coming from all parts, the elaborate bathrooms, the stadium, and the solemn sacrifice of a bull, are all thoroughly, though not exclusively, Minoan; but when we read how the bull is hunted "in the temple of Poseidon without weapons but with staves and nooses," we have an unmistakable description of the bull-ring at Knossos, the very thing which struck foreigners

most, and which gave rise to the legend of the Minotaur.'*

The boundaries which Plato assigns to the Empire of the lost State are practically identical with those over which Minoan influence is now known to have spread, while the description of the island itself is such as to make it almost certain that Crete was the original from which it was drawn. 'The island was the way to other islands, and from these islands you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean.' So Plato describes Atlantis; and when you set beside his sentence a modern description of Crete—'a half-way house between three continents, flanked by the great Libyan promontory, and linked by smaller island stepping-stones to the Peloponnese and the mainland of Anatolia'—there can be little doubt that the two descriptions refer to the same island.

The only difficulty in the way of accepting the identification is that it is stated that the lost Atlantis lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules; but doubtless this statement is due to Solon's misinterpretation of what was said by his Egyptian informant, or to the Saite priest's endeavour to accommodate his ancient tradition to the wider geographical knowledge of his own time. The old Egyptian conception of the universe held that the heavens were supported on four pillars, which were actual mountains; and probably the original story placed

* 'The Lost Continent,' *Times*, February 19, 1909. The anonymous writer was the first to identify Crete with the 'Lost Atlantis.'

the lost island beyond these pillars as a metaphorical way of stating that it was very far distant, as indeed it was to voyagers in those early days. But by Solon's time the limits of navigation were extended far beyond those of the early seafarers. The Phœnician trader had pushed at least as far west as Spain; Necho's fleet had circumnavigated Africa; and so 'the island farthest west,' which naturally meant Crete to the Egyptian of the Eighteenth Dynasty who first recorded the catastrophe of the Minoan Empire, had to be thrust out beyond the Straits of Gibraltar to satisfy the wider ideas of the men of Solon's and Necho's time.

Almost certainly then, Plato's story gives the Saite version of the actual Egyptian records of the greatness and the final disaster of that great island state with which Egypt so long maintained intercourse. Doubtless to the men of the latter part of the Eighteenth Dynasty the sudden blotting out of Minoan trade and influence by the overthrow of Knossos seemed as strange and mysterious as though Crete had actually been swallowed up by the sea. The island never regained its lost supremacy, and gradually sank into the insignificance which is its characteristic throughout the Classical period. So, though neither the priest of Sais nor his Greek auditor, and still less Plato, dreamed of the fact, the wonderful island State of which the Egyptian tradition preserved the memory, was indeed Minoan Crete, and the men of the Lost Atlantis whose portraits Proclus saw in Egypt were none other than the Keftiu of the tombs of Sen-mut and Rekh-ma-ra.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

Prior to 1580 B.C. the dates in the summary must be regarded as merely provisional, and the margin of possible error is wide. The tendency on the part of the Cretan explorers has been to accept in the main the Berlin system of Egyptian dating in preference to that advocated by Professor Flinders Petrie ('Researches in Sinai,' pp. 163-185), on the ground that the development of the Minoan culture can scarcely have required so long a period as that given by the Sinai dating. It must be remembered, however, that the question is still unsettled, and that the longer system of Professor Petrie must be regarded as at least possible.

Crete. B.C.	Egypt (Berlin).	Egypt (Petrie).
10000-3000, Neolithic Age.		
c. 3000-2600, Early Minoan I.	Dynasties I.-V., 3400-2625 B.C.	Dynasties I.-V., 5510-4206 B.C.
c. 2600-2400 „ „ II.	Dynasty VI., 2625-2475 „	Dynasty VI., 4206-4003 „
c. 2400-2200 „ „ III.	Dynasties VII.-X., 2475-2160 „	Dynasties VII.-X., 4003-3502 „
c. 2200-2000, Middle Minoan I. (earlier palaces at Knossos and Phæstos).	Dynasty XI., 2160-2000 „	Dynasty XI., 3502-3459 „
c. 2000-1850, Middle Minoan II. (pottery of Kamares Cave; at end of period destruction of Knossos).	Dynasty XII., 2000-1788 „	Dynasty XII., 3459-3246 „

c. 1850-1600, Middle Minoan III. (Later Palace Knossos; first Villa Hagia Triada; early in period, statuette of Sebek-user; late, Alabastron of Khyan).	Dynasties XIII.-XVII., 1788-1580 B.C.	Dynasties XIII.-XVII., 3246-1580 B.C.
	(Period of confusion and of Hyksos domination.)	
1600-1500, Late Minoan I. (Later Palace Phæstos begun).		
1500-1400, Late Minoan II. (Later Palace Knossos completed; *c.* 1400, fall of Knossos).	Dynasty XVIII., 1580-1350 B.C.	Dynasty XVIII., 1580-1322 B.C.
	(Keftiu on walls of tombs of Sen-mut and Rekh-ma-ra.)	
1400-——, Late Minoan III. (period of partial reoccupation and decline).	Dynasty XIX., 1350-1205 B.C.	Dynasty XIX., 1322-1202 B.C.
c. 1200 (?) Homeric Age.	Dynasty XX., 1200-1090 „	Dynasty XX., 1202-1102 „
	(Cretan tribes mentioned and portrayed by Ramses III., Medinet Habu.)	
	Dynasty XXI., 1090-945 B.C.	Dynasty XXI., 1102-952 B.C.
	(Zakru pirates mentioned by Wen-Amon, Golenischeff Papyrus.)	

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